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ON THE

SHAH'S VISIT



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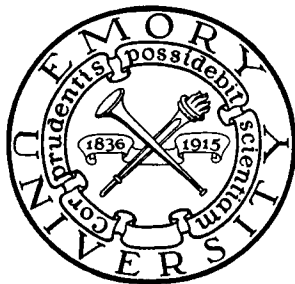
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MRS. BROWN
ON
THE SHAH'S VISIT.

BY
ARTHUR SKETCHLEY,
AUTHOR OF "MRS. BROWN IN THE HIGHLANDS," "THE BROWN PAPERS,"
ETC., ETC.

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P R E F A C E.

I WERE a-sayin' to Mrs. Pendleton, as I thought as there was a werry little knowed about that Persher, considerin' as this er Shar were that rich.

She says, "I were a-askin' my 'arf brother, as is Mr. Moffat, as did used to be a wild bird, but is turned werry serous now, and a-stoppin' along with me, as 'ave jest settled for the third time, and 'ave got the Profits at 'is fingers' ends."

I says, "Oh! indeed, that is lucky," thro' a-knowin' as he were past sixty, and 'ad been a widerer, and thro' the 'oop twice, as the sayin' is.

"Ah!" I says, "it's a long lane as 'ave no turnin'."

She says, "Will you come in some evenin' and 'ear 'im esplain the comin' of the Shar and the other Profits, as he'd been a-givin' lectures all about, with the Red Sea, and them other parts throwed in."

I says, "I will, with pleasure."

She says, "You'll enjoy it, for he's downright

surprisin', and the things as he've taught me is wonderful, as I never knowed even the meanin' on afore."

"Ah!" I says, "it must be a comfort for you to see 'im steady."

"Oh!" she says, "it's all 'is wife, as is a down-right scolard, and I'm sure I never knowed who Nebuconezer were till she told me; and I'll bet you sixpence as you don't tell me off'and, in a moment who Nebuconezer were."

"Nebuconezer," I says, "why," I says, "I 'ave 'eard say as he were King of the Jews, when I were a child, but think it were only for a rhyme to one pair of stockin's and two pair of shoes, as is wot I've 'eard parties sing to babies, to get 'em off when fretful over their teeth; not as I ever did 'old with their bein' rocked to sleep, nor yet too much singin', as is a bad 'abit, and werry worretin' over'ead to others."

"Well," she says, "you don't seem to know much about 'im, but both Moffat and 'is wife says as he's the same as this ere Pershun Shar, as is expected for to come on a wisit, as aven't never yet before been knowed to leave 'is 'ome; and it's werry likely as he'll get knocked on the 'ead when he gets back for 'is pains; as is a jealous lot, them Pershuns, and don't like 'im a-comin' away."

"Well," I says, "then the best thing as he can

do is when he gets away is to stop away, for I'm sure I wouldn't never go back to no 'ome, not to the best as ever was, if I had to expect a knock on the 'ead, even from a 'usban' like poor Mrs. Prinsell, as would stand behind the door that artful with the poker in 'is 'and, poor soul, to let 'er in, and give 'er a drive in the back, as made 'er pitch forard on to 'er chin agin the bottom stair, as sent 'er teeth a-flyin', and pretty nigh brought on lockjaw, and 'er as sober as a judge, and then to say as he smelt rum, and gloried in it, an old wretch."

Says Mrs. Pendleton, "Ah! there's no one knows where the shoe pinches but them as wears it; and no doubt there's many a 'ead as wears a crown as trembles for it."

"Well," she says, "I jest looked in as I were a-passin', to see if you was ready."

I says, "Ready for wot?"

"Why," she says, "you're a-comin' to tea along with me, leastways you promised to 'ear about the Shar."

I says, "Not this arternoon, surely."

She says, "Oh! yes you are, for Mrs. Lines, as lives oppersite, is a-comin' in, as wants to meet you partikler, cos she don't agree with Moffat, and you said you'd come any day, but partikler Toosday."

"Well," I says, "if I said so, I'll come as you expects me, and my word is my bond, as the sayin'

is;” so puts on my bonnet, and over I goes, a-follerin’ close on Mrs. Pendleton’s ’eels, as ’ad said to ’er I could not stop supper, thro’ expectin’ of Brown ’ome, as were a lamb’s-fry, as tho’ rich with fried parsley, I do not consider lays ’eavy on the constitution.

When I got in to Mrs. Pendleton’s, there set Mrs. Lines, as is a goggle-eyed, ’igh cheeked party, wot I calls lobster eyes, and no cap on, tho’ ’er ’ead were bald in patches, behind the ears, as don’t look well to the naked eye.

I only give a bend to ’er, thro’ not bein’ well beknown, ’avin’ only met ’er once, as spoke sneerin’ of the Ole Testemint, as is wot I don’t ’old with.

“The kettle was on the bile,” Mrs. Pendleton said. “But,” she says, “we’ll wait for Mr. Moffat, as is our only gentleman.”

So I says, “By all means;” and see a Welch loaf and some creases on the table, as is things I don’t care for myself; and as to a hegg and bacon, as the gal brought in on a dish with Mr. and Mrs. Moffat, it ain’t a thing as I ever thinks of takin’ with my tea, unless I’ve ’ad only a snack for my dinner.

It’s as well as I didn’t want none, for that Mr. Moffat were as ’ungry as a wolf broke loose, as is a man as I don’t care for myself, tho’ in course couldn’t say nothink agin, thro’ bein’ Mrs. Pendle-

ton's relation, and 'ad turned serous, tho' I knowed 'im when he were a-sellin' blackin' balls on commission, and were a Socialist, and all manner, but 'ad come to see 'is errors under Mrs. Pendleton's minister, as is for dividin' everythink as you've got with everybody, as'd suit Mr. Moffat down to the ground, I should say, as 'adn't a shoe to 'is foot, nor a 'apenny to bless 'isself with, as the sayin' is.

He didn't take much notice of me when he come in, thro' 'avin' of 'is heye on the heatables, as he begun to punish; and as to 'is wife, she were a poor creature as took nothink but tea; while that Mrs. Lines, she lick'd them eggs and bacon up like the ox over the grass, as the sayin' is, and she'd a way with 'er of givin' a snort over 'er wittles, as was only thro' a-fillin' of 'er mouth too full, so obligated to take 'er breath thro' 'er nose like a hinfant at the breast.

Well, over tea Mrs. Pendleton, as is a Plymouth brother, begun a-talkin' about this 'ere Pershun, a-askin' Mr. Moffat whether 'is comin' didn't fulfill the Profits.

"Yes," says Moffat, with his mouth full, "that it do; don't it, Mrs. Brown?"

I says, "Oh! I dare say," not a-knowin' wot to say, thro' not a-understandin' wot Pershun Profits was in.

"Oh!" says Mrs. Lines, a-swallerin' 'arf a hegg

at a gulp, and the knife as she were a-eatin' of it with pretty nigh down 'er throat as well, "don't talk none of that rubbish."

So I says, "Mum, if you are addressin' me, I'd thank you to keep your remarks to yourself."

"Oh!" she says, "no, I don't mean you; but really the rubbish as Mrs. Pendleton do talk quite turns my blood; she can't let nothink pass but she must pull in the Profits."

I says, "And small blame to her. I only wish as I know'd where to lay 'ands on 'em."

I gives a larf.

"Ah!" says that Mrs. Lines, "fools always larfs at their own wits."

I says, "You're a lady, you are, to insult any one like that over a friendly cup of tea."

Says Mrs. Pendleton, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, don't be put out, it's only 'er way, and we must try to lead 'er."

I says, "And a werry bad way in my opinion," but didn't say more thro' Moffat, as were a-drinkin' with 'is mouth full, pretty nigh choked, as give a turn to the conversation, as were jest as well.

When he got over he begun a-talkin', a-sayin' as 'ow he "were quite changed, and 'ad turned Scriptur'-reader."

"Ah!" I says, "and I 'opes as you'll practise wot you reads."

He turns on me sharp, and says, "Wherefore not?"

I says, "I says it were only a 'ope," as couldn't give no offence, for I didn't want to give 'im my opinion on 'im, as would 'ave brought on words; and I certingly did pity 'is poor young wife, as must 'ave been 'is wictim, an old beast, as I knows 'is games. Scriptur'-reader, indeed! He's a man as I never fancies myself, and if I'd 'ave know'd he were a-comin' I'd 'ave kep' out of the way, for when he ain't a-eatin' and drinkin' he's a-preachin'."

He'd set to work at 'is tea with a will, as the sayin' is, and now as it were nearly over, and the things goin' to be took away, he says to Mrs. Pendleton, "Mary Ann, dear, let's 'ave the glasses in at once, for," he says, "time flies."

She says, "That I will, for," she says, "I knows as Mrs. Brown will soon be a-runnin' away."

I'm sure I didn't want nothink in the way of drink, and so I said; but Moffat, he said as he wouldn't 'ave it only it were a dooty; as to Mrs. Lines, she took and poured sperrits into the tumbler, a-sayin' she should take it cold, and she certingly did, for she never put a drop of water to it, and set a-gulpin' at it absent like, a-makin' believe as she didn't know what she were a-doin' of, and a-pre-tendin' to be a-listenin' to Moffat's jaw.

I set a-watchin' 'er as she kep' on a-sippin', as we 'ad to listen to that there Scriptur'-reader, as was a-jawin' away about the Medes and Pershuns as alters not, and 'is poor wife a-sheddin' tears over it.

So I didn't make no remarks thro' not a-know-in' wot he were a-drivin' at; but see as that Mrs. Lines were a-gettin' as tight as a drum, as the sayin' is.

So I says at last, "Mrs. Pendleton, you'll excuse me a-speakin'; but," I says, "if you don't move that there bottle of sperrits some on us won't be like them Medes and Pershuns, for," I says, "one, at least, is a-alterin' every minnit, and for the wuss."

I 'adn't 'ardly got the words out when that Moffat turns on me, and says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, don't jest over it, as is one of them kingdoms, and all pints to Armygeddon as is a-comin' on swift."

"Well," I says, "let 'im come if that's 'is name," a-thinkin' he were illudin' to the Shar.

"Oh!" he says, "when you sees anyone a-backslidin', why not estend a arm of flesh;" for he says "it is to this end as we've met, a-knowin' as our dear sister ain't one with us, but why not try to snatch 'er away. Why not let 'er see 'er way into cool pastures, as she longs for arter the thirstin' wilderness."

I says, "It ain't no wonder as she's that thirsty, and not no business of mine, but raw sperrits won't never quench 'er thirst nor anybody else's."

I 'adn't got the words out when that Mrs. Lines she takes and pours out some cold water into 'er tumbler, as she'd jest been and emptied.

So I says to myself, "Water at last, that's a mussy as I'm glad to see."

I see 'er give a glazy-eyed sort of a look at me once or twice, and then if she didn't take and dash the water slap in my face. I never was so took aback in my born days. Up I jumps, and ketches up my chair and backs it, and puts it down agin sudden, and drops into it. When I 'eard a roar like a bull, and old Moffat as yelled out and 'ad been settin' behind me, ketched 'old of my 'ead of 'air and pulled at it like mad.

Mrs. Moffat, she give a scream and fainted; and Mrs. Lines, she got up and fell forard like a sack on the rug, a-screamin' and yellin'; and Mrs. Pendleton, she begun a-draggin' at me like a fiery fury, a-sayin', "Get up, you're on 'is foot."

And so I was, sure enuf, chair and all reglar pinned 'im, poor old feller, as 'ad a carpet-slipper on thro' gout, as 'ad laid 'im up for weeks.

'Is yells was dreadful, and it's a-wonder as the naybours didn't come in.

I couldn't do nothink for a minnit, and then tried

to 'elp that Mrs. Lines up, as fought like a wild beast, so couldn't go near 'er; no more couldn't Mrs. Pendleton; as to Mrs. Moffat, she were attendin' to 'im.

"Oh!" she says, a-rubbin' away at 'is foot, "He must 'ave medical aid."

"Indeed," I says, "I'm dreadful sorry, and no doubt he's much 'urt; but there ain't nothink better than to soak it in a little warm water, as will give 'im ease."

Mrs. Pendleton she were a-stoopin' over that Mrs. Lines on the rug, as were quieter now, a-rubbin' of 'er temples with cold water.

As to Moffat, he'd been a-usin' that langwidge as don't become a Scriptur'-reader, tho', in course, it were escusable, for flesh and blood is flesh and blood, and Scriptur'-readers 'as got toes like the rest on us.

His poor wife, as is twenty years 'is junerer, she were a-whimperin' and were the wust of the two, and says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, 'ave a feelin' 'art and think of Neemier's toe, and do step for a doctor, as I'm sure that poor creature on the rug must require too."

I says, "Your 'usban's toe will be all right if you soaks it in a little loo-warm water, as I tells you; and as to this 'ere creature, 'er fits no doubt will be 'er end if they don't keep 'er from the bottle."

"Wot do you mean?" says Mrs. Pendleton, a-lookin' up; "she aint took more than the rest on us."

I says, "Look at your bottle, as is drained."

"Why," she says, "so it is."

"Yes," I says, "and no wonder, for I never see a woman lap it up more freely."

"Oh," says Moffat, a-groanin', "you're 'ard on 'er, as were listenin' to me that attentive as she didn't know what she were doin', while a-drinkin' i my words, as was that powerful to 'er as werry often will make a lion turn like a lamb."

"Ah!" I says, "she'd 'ave listened a-deal longer if she 'adn't been too 'andy with the bottle, as 'ave been a-watchin' 'er myself this 'arf 'our."

He says, "I never see 'er."

I says, "You must be as blind as a bat then, as the sayin' is;" and as to Mrs. Pendleton, she'd got 'er back to 'er, thro' a-turnin' to the light to look out tests as he were a-quotin', and so couldn't see. "But," I says, "'ow are you a-goin' to get 'er up?" for she'd screamed 'erself out by this time.

"Oh!" says Mrs. Pendleton, "let 'er lay still for a bit, she always gets over 'er fits best on 'er back; and," she says, "I do think as you're mistaken over the lickin'."

I says, "I 'opes I am; but," I says, "'Ope told a flatterin' tale,' as the sayin' is."

And so it proved; for just then that Mrs. Lines she set up, and Mrs. Pendleton says, "Are you better, dear?"

She only made a noise in 'er throat like the sink stopped, and Mrs. Pendleton says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, come and 'elp me on to the sofy with this poor sufferer."

I says, "I'll help you, but as to sufferins, I should say as she's one as enjoys 'em."

Old Moffat he'd limped out of the room, a-leanin' on 'is wife's arm for to go and put 'is toe in warm water, and Mrs. Pendleton she were that nervous as I 'ad all the weight of that Mrs. Lines on me, as were more than I could bear up agin; and down I let 'er drop as seemed for to wake her up, for she says, a-speakin' thick and muzzy like, "I don't want no 'elp," and managed to get to the sofy, and there she set, a-starin' and rockin' of 'erself backards and forards.

So I puts on my bonnet, and Mrs. Pendleton says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, don't be a-goin' for a minnit, for I don't like to leave 'er alone, and must go and see arter poor Neemier's toe, cos 'is young wife don't know nothink."

I says to myself, "So I should think, or she wouldn't 'ave married that old goat; but," I says, "I'll stop a few minnits, not as she don't want no watchin now as there ain't no bottle in 'er way."

Mrs. Pendleton she goes out, and I set with my bonnet a-watchin' that 'tosticated old toad, as all of a suddin got up and walks across the room as steady as a rock, goes straight to the sideboard, opens the cupboard in it, takes out a bottle, an puts it to 'er lips.

I 'ollers out, "Oh! Mrs. Pendleton, do come up, for if this 'ere old woodcock ain't at it agin."

I 'adn't got the words out when I 'eard Mrs. Pendleton and Moffat a-comin' up, jest as that inubriated old fish-fag sent the bottle at me flyin', as missed me thro' 'avin' opened the door, and dodged out of 'er way, when I 'eard 'er comin' arter me full pelt, a-swearin' as she'd 'ave my life, with the fire-shovel in 'er 'and.

I give a rush at the street-door, and sent both Mrs. Pendleton and Moffat down the kitchen stairs backards, and out I runs into the street, with that woman arter me, a-yellin' "Stop thief."

I run like the wind, at the top of my speed, as the sayin' is, and goes along the pavement 'ardly a-touchin' the ground, and should 'ave turned the corner all right, but for the dratted pot-boy a-leavin' of 'is beer-tray agin a airy gate, and over it went with such a slush, all over the pavement, jest as Mrs. Lines were close on me, so close, indeed, as to go a-flyin' over me full butt agin the perlice, as were

a-walkin' along the kerbstone in a line, one arter the other, for to relieve guard.

It's a downright mussy as they did come up, for there would 'ave been murder if they 'adn't, as pulled up and made me go back to Mrs. Pendleton's with them, and that intosticated creetur, as certingly 'ad got wonderful sober, thro' winegar as she'd drunk at the side-board.

Arter a bit, thro' Moffat a-talkin' to the perlice, we was able for to square it, and they did not take no one in charge, but went off; and when they was gone, Mrs. Lines, she bust out a-cryin', a-sayin' as she forgive me; but never would she set down under the same tea-table with me no more, and out of the room she flounces.

I calls arter 'er and says, "It'swerry fine in you a-talkin' about forgivin' me; as shall carry your marks to the grave, with all my clothes tore and spilte, and 'arf-a-crown to pay for the beer as is wasted, and all for wot, as I'm sure I never wanted to come in."

"Oh!" says Mrs. Pendleton, "'wotever brawls disturbs the streets, there should be peace at 'ome.'"

I says, "Oh! bother; let me get 'ome, as aint fit to be seen, and smells like a brewer's wat, thro' bein' reglar soaked thro' with beer."

Says Moffat, "Ah!" he says, "I'm sorry as you didn't pay more attentions to wot I were a-sayin', cos it would 'ave throwed light on this

'ere comin' Shar, as is a wonder, like a cloud a over-shadderin' the world."

"Well," I says, "if he's a-goin' to spend all the money they talks on, it's a pity as there ain't a few more clouds like 'im a-'angin' over us."

"Ah!" he says, "don't think of 'is wile dross."

"No," I says, "I shan't, when he's got all that there gold and precious stones about 'im; but," I says, "I can't stop to 'ear no more about 'im now, for 'ome I must go, and am glad as it's no wuss; but don't ask me to come to no more classes over the Profits, cos," I says, "they've been pretty nigh a dead loss to me, life and limb both, to say nothink of my bonnet and 'ead of 'air, as is tore to ribbins, and my clothes all spilte."

So 'ome I went, a-leavin' of them two to groan over me, and when I got in, there was Brown jest a-goin' in for a pipe afore supper, as I could see wanted 'is supper, tho' I were 'ome by 'arf-past eight.

He didn't take much notice on me at fust, thro' bein' busy with his paper, as he wanted to read all about this ere Shar.

So I stops a minnit jest to ask 'ow far he'd got; as he told me was Petersburg, and were a-goin' upstairs without another word, when all of a sudden Brown looks up and gives a loud sniff or two, and

then he give a stare at me as certainly did look dishovelled; and then he says, "Why, Martha, you must 'ave been at a wake, or somethink like that."

"No," I says, "I've only been to 'ear about the comin' Shar; as old Moffat's been a-espoundin' over, and says as he is one of the Profits."

"Well," he says, "you've been a-drinkin' up all the profits I should say wherever you've been, for your that strong of sperrits and beer, as I can smell you 'ere."

"So," I says, "I must go up and change everythin', and then I'll come and tell you all about it."

So upstairs I goes, a-tellin' the gal to be ready with 'er fryin'-pan, as 'ad bread-crumbed the lamb's fry afore I went out, and when over supper I told Brown what old Moffat 'ad said about the Shar bein' of a kingdom.

He says, "Look 'ere, Martha, you let that alone, as is goin' out of your depth; and next time you goes to a serous tea, don't you interfere with no one else's licker, and when you meets Mr. Moffat you ask 'im where he's been and invested that little bit of money as he were kind enuf to take care on for Mrs. Brittle, his fust wife's dorter, as is in want of it. Ah!" he says, a-shakin' of 'is fist at the vacant hair, "the rascal, I wish I

could ketch 'im a-readin', I'd read 'im a lesson as he wouldn't never forget."

So I see as Brown were put out, so I didn't say no more that night; not as I got much pity out on 'im when I did tell 'im, two days arter the report, as that Mrs. Lines give out about me, a-sayin' as I kicked up sich a row at a Bible-class, as they was obliged to send for the perlice to turn me out in licker.

So, I says to myself, I won't go to no more serous parties, to 'ear about the Shar, but will look to wot the papers tells me, tho' in course I can't trust them "Telegraphs" no more arter that there Kiver news; cos in course if one man can take and make a 'oaks on 'em why shouldn't another, and for my part I considers it's wonderful as they can give the news as they do; but certingly no news is good news, as the sayin' is, and certingly no news is better than false news. So no more "Telegraphs" for me, as would always rather wait for a letter myself. Cos 'ow can you esplain anythin' when you're a-payin' for it by the letter, as is wot the "Telegraph" does, and could only get a second-class passenger to write it, as it's always best to go fust-class in a long journey like that I considers, as is goin' with the Times, as in general is a fust-rate leader.

It's a mussy, in my opinion, as we ain't got

papers like France, as wants to bully everybody and settle everything; and that's why Brown says they're all so savidge at old Tears bein' turned out, cos he were one of that press-gang, as I've 'eard my dear mother talk on when she were a gal, as did used to go about a-kidnappin' men for sailors, and would carry 'em off like the slave-trade, as is werry like recruitin', for I'm sure young Camble he never listed in 'is sober senses.

In course it's all werry fine a-talkin', but, if we must 'ave sogers and sailors, and parties won't go by fair means, they must take 'em by foul, as the sayin' is; and as to slavery, why, it's only another word for to call it by; and if these 'ere strikes goes on, why, slavery we must 'ave, cos we can't 'ave our gas cut off, nor our cabs and buses stop runnin', and 'ow is it to end? We must either 'ave slaves or else done by machinery, as everything is a-comin' to as'll make that there Shar open 'is eyes, I expects, when he comes to see the workin' on, as no doubt he'll want to take back to Persher, and then set up a oppersition, as, in course, can work a deal cheaper, like all the other forriners as undersells us, partikler in the iron line, as them Beljuns can work us out of the field, and so can the Germans in printin'; and it will soon end in all the work bein' done out of the country, and we shan't 'ave nothink to do but to pay for it, and 'ow long will that last,

I should like to know? But all as I do 'ope is as they won't let this 'ere Shar 'umbug us into lettin' all 'is things in for nothink, and then let 'im put a 'eavy dooty on our'n.

Of all things, I do 'ope as they won't trust that there Shar on a bycicle, as 'll be sure to run us all down, cos, in course, it's 'is 'abits for everyone to get out of 'is way, and 'im not to look out; as is all werry fine, but we ain't all as young and as active as we did used to be, and tho', if Mr. Lowe 'isself were to knock me over, I shouldn't go and drownd myself like that poor fishmonger thro' a-takin' it to 'art, yet in course I should feel it, and not consider it a 'oner to be knocked down by all the Shars as ever lived.

Any'ow, I shall keep out of 'is way, for fear he might take a fancy to 'ave a talk with me, tho' 'he can't speak no langwidge 'isself, as never were a good 'and at dumb-show myself; and, in my opinion, the best thing as they could do would be to let 'im 'ave the Deaf and Dumb School always with 'im, as would understand their signs a deal better than anyone's talk.

Wotever he could 'ave been a-thinkin' about to come 'ere and not know 'ow to speak a word, as might 'ave got the book "English without a Master," as shows as any fool can learn it if it don't want no master, tho' some is that quick at learnin', for I

well remembers the youngest Miss Wittles, she never 'ad a dancin' master, and yet were the best dancer of the lot, thro' only seein' of 'er sisters.

But I must say as wot with Moffat a-sayin' this 'ere Shar's comin' is a sign of the hend of the world, and wot with the things as I've 'eard Brown read and say about him, and the books as Mrs. Padwick and Miss Pilkinton 'ave been a-readin' about Pershun ways, I do feel a little bit nervous, and shall be glad when he's been, and safe gone agin, as no doubt will be Queen Wictoria, as don't care about no forriners in 'er 'ouse, as their 'abits aint nice; but 'as he've inwited 'isself, and can pay his way, we can't say shan't to the Shar; and all we've got to 'ope is as he'll keep 'isself to 'isself, and remember he's in a Christian country, where 'is outlandish 'eathen ways can't be put up with, and wot's more they won't be while we've got the Perlice, and the Wolunteers, with the Army and Navy, to keep order.

MRS. BROWN ON THE SHAH'S VISIT.

I WAS a-settin' a-talkin' along with poor Mrs. Malchin, as is a dreadful sufferer with the bronchitis, and 'im bowed down with lumbager, as ketches 'is breath in a-tryin' to straighten 'isself, poor feller, as is a wonderful man for seventy-six, and no flannin next 'is skin, as is, in my opinion, 'ighly dangerous, thro' checked pusperations a-throwin' things into the lungs, the same as Mrs. Barweld, as never 'eld 'er 'ed up agin after a day at the Christial Pallis, as it was them steps as cort 'er, poor soul, as she 'urried up, as the Merrykins says, and would 'ave gone back a docker, as the sayin' is, if it 'adn't been as the 'ole party was close on 'er 'eels, and she come fust agin me and Mrs. Bonner, as is about of a size, and able to bear : shock like that, but never see any one go blacker in the face, as they says is the 'art a-stoppin' sudden, like our kitchin clock, as I do believe as the kitten's been a-playin' with it, as is a Dutch one as I bought

over twenty years ago at the door of one of them for-
riners, as did use to come round a-strikin' their clocks
up and down the street with their fingers, but must
'aveall gone back 'ome, for they aint never seen about
now, as is no doubt cos the Inglish 'ave got that
clever at clock-makin' theirselves, so don't want no
more Dutch clocks, any more than Dutch cheese, as
the Merrykins 'ave been and cut out of the busi-
ness.

Well, as I were a-sayin', Mrs. Malchin's bron-
chitis were that bad as he sent me word as if I
ever wished to see 'er agin in this world, I'd better
come to tea the fust afternoon as were convenient,
so in course would not put it off, for time flies and
life's uncertaineven without no bronchitis to take you
off suddin, the same as poor Mrs. Mealman, as were
a-servin' in the shop on the Friday and in 'er grave
the follerin' Toosday, not as she were a woman as
ever I dealt with, as could not put up with false
weights and wrong change over two bars of soap
and some airth-stones, as in a general way I buys at
the door, for it gives them poor girls a chance of a
livin' as calls 'em.

So I said as I would go that very next Thursday,
and were with them by 'arf-past three, with the
kittle a-bilin' and the tea-things laid; not as I
wanted cold 'am, nor yet a German sausage, with a
fancy loaf and fresh butter, for my tea is my tea,

and never nothing more than a slice of thin bread and butter, thro' a-thinkin' as the tea may rake the stomick if took too 'ot or too empty.

The moment I see Mrs. Malchin I says to myself, "There aint no dyin' 'bout 'er;" so I took and cheered 'er up, and made 'er 'ave two teaspoons in each cup—leastways not the first, but the two last—as brought the colour back in 'er face; and she 'ad six oysters and a glass of stout afore I left, as is a constitution like my own, tho' no relation, as don't stand no triffin' with, and they'd been a-keepin' of 'er too low; and as to 'im, I says, "You take a little gin and water, with operdeldock rubbed in, and a bit of flannin jest across the small of your back, and you'll be another man in the mornin'."

So while we was a-chattin' about all manner of things, says Malchin to me, "Mrs. Brown, m'm, wotever do you think about this 'ere Shaw a-comin' 'ere?"

I says, "Wot Shaw?"

"Oh," he says, "the Shaw of Persher."

I said, "I've knowed Shaws and 'eard tell of Shaws, partikler Shaw the Life-Guardsman, as cut the French army in 'arf at Waterloo with 'is long sword, and died in the arms of wictory, like Lord Nelson, tho' not berried in Westminster Abbey, as

were 'is desserts, poor fellow, and wot he were a-lookin' forard to."

"Then," I says, "there were Mrs. Shaw as were in the clear-starchin' line, and 'ad a dorter marry over somewheres in Germany, as some calls Persher."

"No," says Mr. Malchin, "you're a-thinkin' of Proosher."

I says, "Escuse me, but I am not a-thinkin' of anythink of the sort, thro' a-knowin' Proosher well, and in course 'ave heard speak of Persher, as is were the cats and silks comes from, not as it's any good escept for linin' or pre'aps a blind; and all as I've got to say is he may come, but he don't get me to drink none of his sherbet as they sells in the streets a 'apenny a glass, as one mouthful once near caused my death in the Westminster Bridge Road, as the boy 'adn't stirred up proper, and so I took and gulped and swallowed the powder, as took and efferfestered in my throat, and it's a mercy didn't blow my lungs out. But," I says, "wotever's a-bringin' 'im, as I'm sure Queen Wictoria don't want to be bothered with no 'eathen Turks; and if he've got 'is eye on that there Princess Beetrice, why, the sooner as he takes it off of 'er the better, for I'm sure 'er royal family won't never let her be took and shet up in one of them 'arem-scarem places."

"Oh!" says Malchin, "he's a great man."

"Ah!" I says, "I dessay he is when he'-

'ome, so 'e'd better keep there, for we don't want 'im."

"Oh!" says Mrs. Malchin, "he wears jewels as is worth all our National Debt put together."

"Well, then," I says, "he'd better not walk down Whitechapel arter dark, or he'll be garrotted as safe as 'ouses, as the sayin' is."

"But," I says, "'ow about Persher, aint it somewheres near Germany?"

"No," says Malchin, "it's werry nigh Injy, and it's a part as them Rooshins 'as got their eyes on."

"Oh," I says, "that must be a werry long way off, cos we all knows as Roosher is cold and Injy is 'ot, so pre'aps it would be a good thing if they was to be jined, cos they'd 'eat and cool one another."

He didn't say nothink, but were a-goin' to get up and get me a map for to look at when 'is lumberer ketched 'im that sharp as he were obligated to drop into 'is chair, as were jest as well for I didn't want none of 'is maps nor larnin' books as always confuses me; and as to Persher, any fool knows were that is, and if they don't, why they can soon find out.

Says Malchin, when he got 'is breath agin, "Persher's a werry wonderful part, as were a mighty umpire once."

"Ah!" I says; "I dessay. Not as I care for

none of them umpires myself, thro' not a-'oldin' with no prize-fights."

Malchin didn't say nothink, but made 'is niece fetch 'im a book, and says, "Now, Mrs. Brown, I'll read you about Persher, as you don't seem to know much on."

I says, "Escuse me, Mr. Malchin, but I knows quite as much about it as I wants to, as is a 'eathen lot, and am not one as 'olds with misshunaries myself, cos they walks theirselves off with their wives and families for to teach the 'eathen, and leaves lots of 'eathens at 'ome ; not as it matters much, cos they don't esactually know wot to teach nobody thro' not knowin' theirselves, the same as the man as come and told me as I were invited to Exeter 'All to meet one of the apostles."

I says, "Bless your 'art, my good man, I aint fit company for such as them, as 'eaven is their 'ome."

"Oh!" he says, "they've come on earth agin."

I says, "You'll escuse me a-sayin' as I don't believe it, cos," I says, "they 'ad no such time on it when they was 'ere as to wish to come back, as did their work and is gone to their reward, and can't 'ave done nothink to deserve to be sent back agin, so that won't wash, as the sayin' is, tho' in course, we all knows as there's lots as considers

theirselves saints as goes to Exeter 'All, and all as I says I 'opes as they may be right."

So I see as Malchin were a-gettin' a little shirty, as the sayin' is, cos he belonged to a chapel 'isself, where they all got to loggerheads over one of the deekins, as they called 'im, as were sent for fifteen years, tho' nearly everyone swore as he were inner cent, and four or five on 'em took their hoaths as he were in the chapel at the time, as they see 'im with their own eyes, as broke down under bein' cross-questioned; while three perlice and seven or eight naybours was present when he were took up, with 'is back parlour door bust open, where he used to teach the little gals their 'ims of a Sunday arternoon, as were out 'Oxton way many year ago; so Malchin he's always been shy of talkin' chapel to me, cos I knows my way about, and, as I says before, no doubt there's excellent misshunaries, the same as one I knowed, as were a-goin' out for to teach them San'wich Ilands decency, as don't wear no clothes, and eats their own relations, tho' he 'ad a wife and three young children, but never got further than Plymouth, thro' bein' that sea-sick, and 'is poor wife that afraid of the sea, so wouldn't go no further; as shows their sense, cos, in course, the 'eathen's all werry well, but we must look at 'ome first, and I must say as that young misshunary were in earnest, and meant to stop out there a-many

years, for he took out furniter and all manner, as cost over three 'undred pounds, and was two boat-loads to bring ashore agin, as was sold for a old song in Plymouth, cos in course they wasn't no use for a 'ouse in England. But that young man 'ave got on werry well, as 'ave a 'an'some chapel somewhere over the water, and as fine a family as you'd see in a day's walk, and, tho' he did lose 'is wife with 'er ninth, bore it wonderful, and married a werry nice young lady, with a pretty fortune, within the year, as is wot I calls resignation; tho' I never see 'ansomer mournin' than he wore for 'is fust, even to a black walkin'-stick, as looked werry solemn, and a funeral equal to Queen 'Lizzybeth's.

So as I didn't want no words about this 'ere Shah as is a-comin', why, I 'eld my tung over old Malchin a-sayin' they was 'ard at work with gettin' a lot of tracks ready for 'im; as, in course, won't 'ave nothink to do when he does come but to set and read tracks all day long.

So, when I got 'ome, and Brown he come in, I says to 'im, "Whoever is this Mr. Shaw, as is a-comin' the Pershun over us?"

He says, "He aint no mister, bless you; but the 'ead of them people as wuships the sun."

I says, "Oh, indeed! with the moon and seven stars throwed in, I suppose?"

He says, "Why, didn't you never 'ear tell of the Fire Washippers?"

I says, "I can't say as ever I did, as would 'ave been a nice dear religion to 'ave kep' up this winter, with coals the price they've been; and I don't believe as we shall see them down agin in a 'urry, tho'," I says, "in course, if it's fire as they wuships, parafeen would do; but," I says, "they must be the same religion as our cat, for I'm sure she reglar adores the fire, and it's a wonder to me as she ain't roasted 'er eyes out of 'er 'ead afore this."

Brown he'd got 'is pipe, so didn't make me no anser not for ever so long, not till he'd done 'is supper; and then he says over 'is pipe and drop of grog, "Martha," he says, "wot was you a-sayin' about them parties as wuships fire?"

"Why," I says, "I were merely a-sayin' as they'd better stop at 'ome and do it; and not come over 'ere, where firin' is sich a price."

So Brown, he only give a nod, as much as to say go on, for I do believe as that man takes a pride in me, and is fond of earin' me talk, partikler when it's a subje as I'm up to; as I can't say I am about Persher or Proosher neither, for that matter, tho' I 'ave been there, as is where the Oder Colone comes from; but am up to the knocker about coals.

So I says, "Mr. Malchin says as we must conwert 'im, so I suppose he's a Roman Catholic,

or something like that, as Malchin can't a-bear the name on.

"But," I says, "if he wuships fire, I suppose that's why they've put that there light on the top of the Parlyment, as he can see out of the winders, and says 'is prayers to, when the sun ain't out; but," I says "'owever will he get along the streets at night, as will be obligated for to stop and fall down afore every gas lamp; and, in course, would treat a fardin' rushlight with respect, as in course can't 'elp bein' a mean light, and gives all as it can, and quite euul to burn all night, without a-keepin' you awake with its glare."

Brown he kep' on a-noddin', but all of a suddin he turns on me, and says, "Martha, wotever are you a-maggin' about? wot was you a-askin' about that Shaw, as is called a Shar over there, not a Shaw."

"Oh!" I says, "indeed, as am glad to know 'is right name, and live and learn, as the sayin' is, in the ways of the world."

"Well," says Brown, "then remember as he's the Shar, and 'ave got jewels as is worth a 'eap of money."

"Yes," I says, "so I 'ear that they are worth more than all the Bank of England put together."

Brown says, "Rubbish."

"Oh," I says, "wherever is Persher?"

"Oh!" says Brown, "jēst close agin In-dier."

"Well, then," I says, "'owever can the cats get 'ere, as I knows will find their way back to a place wonderful; only never can't cross the water, as is why I sent that sandy beast, as we couldn't get rid on, over to Mrs. Trimwell, as lives close agin the Magdilin."

Brown he were a-readin' of 'is paper, as he'll do by the 'our together, and never seems to mind me a-talkin' over my work.

"So," I says, "when is he a-comin'?"

"Why," says Brown, "next month as 'ave started from 'ome with three wives and millions of money, as he's a-goin' to spend on 'is journey."

I says, "You don't mean to say as he's a-goin' to dare to bring them three 'ussies 'ere with 'im?"

"Yes," says Brown, "and he's a-goin' to live in Buckinham Pallis, as Queen Wictoria is a-goin' to lend 'im."

"Well, then," I says, "mark my words, as sure as ever he sets 'is foot ashore Queen Wictoria 'ill take and give 'im in custody for bigimy, as is eighteen months, and did used to be transportation, so he'll spend 'is 'olliday in Cold Bath-fields or Brixton, and serve 'im right, a waggeberbone."

Says Brown, "Wot downright nonsense you

do talk ; why, it's the customs of 'is country to 'ave three wives."

"Wot," I says, "all at one time, and in the same 'ouse like the Turks and Mormins, as did ought to be put down ; and," I says, "if they likes to live like cock and 'ens, and other wild beasts in their own country, let 'em, but not come 'ere where there's decent women a-livin', and a pretty esample for to set the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburrer, as is a-goin' to marry a Rooshun, only there aint no fear of them a-wantin' more than one wife at a time cos I'm sure Queen Wictoria and the Hemperor of Russia wouldn't 'ear on it, and the Princess of Wales she'd jest go 'ome to 'er father, and take 'er little royal family with 'er, and I'm sure the Prince of Wales wouldn't find a prettier, sweeter lookin' face, as I'm sure he's proud on, as he did ought to be, as shows 'is good taste."

So Brown says, "Ah ! you don't know what we shall come to afore we dies."

I says, "Right you are. Cos now as them diworces is all the go, wot is to prewent anyone as 'ave diworced 'is wife a-takin' of 'er back agin, and in course if a gentleman, he would not turn the other lady out, and there'd be two ; not as any decent woman would stoop to live in the same 'ouse with er 'usban' and 'is columbine, as is what in course she'd considor 'is other wife."

"Well," says Brown, "I'm glad as they're a-goin' to take 'im in at the Pallis, for it weren't decent a-sendin' kings and queens to a 'otel."

"Well," I says, "for my part I should say as no respectable 'otel wouldn't take 'im in; not with sich disgraceful goin's on, and that's the reason why they've give 'im a pallis; and I don't believe as ever he'll get asked to Winsor, a-goin' about with 'is nasty trollops at 'is eels, as would make all the Royal Family blush at the werry 'earin' about 'em, let alone the sight on 'em."

"Why," says Brown, "the Queen's a-comin' back from Scotland a-purpose to see 'im."

"Well," I says, "he'd better not go to Scotland with them creeturs, cos the Scotch is that partikler as they'd jest take and put 'im in the pillory, and send them fieldmales to the plenitenshary."

"Ah," says Brown, "them as is as rich as that there Shar may do wot they likes."

"Oh!" I says, "may they." I says, "I don't believe it, and I'm sure if this 'ere King of the Beljums 'ad come 'ere with three wives he'd 'ave got the cold shoulder, as the sayin' is, pretty quick, tho' he is Queen Wictoria's own fust cousin by the mother's side, as can jest remember 'is father a-livin' at Claremont myself, when a gal, thro' a cousin at Kingston as 'er mother took in washin' at Esher when he lived there with the Princess Char-

lotte, as were 'is fust wife as died with her fust, as is before I can recollect, but 'ave 'eard say as everybody bust into tears and wore black for her, poor thing, thro' bein' that loved; though they do say as 'er father couldn't never a-bear her for her mother's sake, as left his roof within the month when she were born, as were runnin' a great risk to change your bed; but that's the wust of them family quarrels, and all comes of 'avin' two wives at a time, as were wot George the Fourth gloried in, tho' one were not 'is lawful wife, thro' bein' a Catholic, as is agin the laws, and might be burnt now if the Act of Parlyment were carried out; but I've 'eard say as this 'ere King of the Beljums as reigns over Brussels is a werry good man, and so is 'is good lady, tho' they're too fond of wisitin' Jews and Turks for me, as is wot I considers settin' of a bad example, and wot old King George would 'ave laid 'is 'ead on the block for fust, and wouldn't never tolerate no Catholics, as the werry thought on drove 'im mad, poor feller."

"But," I says, "Princess Charlotte she 'adn't much of a time of it, for wot with the rows between 'er father and mother, and bein' kep' that strict by 'er old grandmother, as wouldn't never allow any one to set down afore her, and they do say were a reglar old dragon, she must 'ave been glad to 'ave married any one, as were a good match for that old

Leepold, though it didn't last long, and come to end 'is days over in Beljum with a second wife, as shows there is no tellin' wot is goin' to 'appen to us afore we dies, for we're all born but none of us berried, as the sayin' is; and in course that Leepold, he naturally expected for 'is good lady to be Queen of England, and so she would 'ave been if she 'adn't died, as would be the same age all but three years as my dear mother, as married at seventeen, and never see sixty-three through a quinsey, as wouldn't 'ave ended fatal if she could 'ave been brought to larf at it, but always said from the fust as she shouldn't never get over it, as is no larfin' matter."

But I do hope as that there Shar will be'ave like a Christian while he's 'ere, and go to church like the rest, if it's only for the look of the thing, as is public decency; and, I says, in course ev'ry one will be glad to see 'im, and I'm glad as we're a-goin' to 'ave the outside of the 'ouse painted, and I means to 'ave flowers outside the winders, with the pots all red-leaded, and the winder-sells well whitened, and clean blinds and curtings, as'll look werry nice if he should pass, as a-many does, thro' bein' a short cut to the Great Western; and in course he'll be glad to go the shortest way everywhere, thro' 'avin' 'ad such a lot of travellin', and in a 'urry to get over the ground and 'ome agin, cos if he's too long away from them Pershuns they'll be

a-playin' up Meg's divershuns, tho' I dessay he 'ave left a reglar old Beestmark behind to punch their 'eads for 'em, as is werry like Prooshins, no doubt, thro' bein spelt werry nigh the same, as is wot I always goes by.

I do 'ope as he'll be careful over 'is eatin' and drinkin', and not go and kill 'iself with rump stakes and cowcumpers, as were the end of the King and Queen of the Sangwich Ilands, and remembers a little dwarf myself, as was killed thro' over-eatin' of 'erself with pound-cake and whit-art cherries, as 'adn't the sense to spit out the stones, as nothink but old cheese won't dissolve, as it 'ave been knowed to do arter death, when black drafts was useless, and pills throwed away.

So I says, I shall read all about 'im reg'lar; and it's a mussy as there's somebody else to think about besides this 'ere Claimint, as is pretty nigh used up, cos Brown won't 'ear 'is name, nor yet no illushuns to 'im, and mum's the word with me; but I'm sure as this 'ere Shar must be worth anyone a-seein', if it's only for 'is jewels; and it's well as Queen Wictoria don't wear no finery now, cos in course she wouldn't like to cut a mean figger afore 'im, as she wouldn't be nothing compared with, not if she was to 'ire all the dimons and things as is in London; and no doubt all them duchesses and ladies would lend 'er all their things, jest for to make a

'andsome show ; but she ain't one to wear no borrowed plumes, and would scorn to make believe as things belongs to 'er as don't, thro' bein' a lady all over, as open and above-board is 'er ways, and not like Mrs. Palver, as borrowed my own aunt's Scotch chrystshul brooch for a christenin', and never would give it up, a-sayin' as the old lady 'ad give it 'er with 'er dyin' breath, as she never 'ad none, poor soul, to give with, but was took sudden with a fit, and never spoke agin, tho' she lived over three days, and made signs, but nothink as could 'ave meant a chrystshul brooch, for I never left 'er ; and as to Mrs. Palver, she only called once at the door to inquire arter 'er ; for I wouldn't 'ave 'ad that woman in the 'ouse for the world arter the way as she be'aved when old Mr. Baldock died, a-pocketin' of 'is large tumbler as he made 'is punch in of a night, with 'is initials blowed in on the front ; but never did 'er no good, for she set down on it in the bus as 'er and me went 'ome in together, as might 'ave been 'er death thro' a-causin' lock-jaw ; tho' she did say as it weren't nothink when I see 'er give a violent start up when she felt it, as it's a mussy the glass didn't work into 'er constitution, the same as the man as did used to eat tumblers for a wager, and died of inflermashun a-settin' up in the stomick, as the powdered glass brought on the same as a pin 'ave been knowed to do, as is base metal, and won't

work out at the knee-joints like a needle, as is pure steel, as some takes as a medsin ; and I 'ave knowed iron rust give, as I don't 'old with myself, as might iron-mould your inside, as we all knows will eat anythink into 'oles, if not took out with salts of lemons. Brown he's such a one if he do take anythink up, as there ain't no stoppin' 'im ; and when he fust 'eard about this 'ere Shar a-comin', if he didn't take and get books all about Persher and them parts, as he took and read out on to me of a evenin', as one were called Syclerpedier, as is Pershun for 'istory ; and certingly them Pershuns was oners, as the sayin' is, for to go to war, as would come over the sea in bridges made with boats along with millions.

I says, " Why, that's wot this 'ere Shar is a-goin' to do, and I'm sure if he'll make a bridge of boats over from Dover to Calais, why we shall be obliged to 'im, if he'd only show us 'ow to do it, cos we've got lots of boats, only we're sich muffs as we can't manage 'em proper, and I 'ave 'eard say as it is sea-sickness as stops Queen Wictoria from goin' to Ireland, so no doubt she'll ask this 'ere Shar to put 'er up to 'avin' a bridge of boats across, and then she'll go to Ireland twice a year, the same as she do to Scotland, as is only fair.

Says Brown, " Jest you listen, why this Pershun

he took and ate up everything on the way, and drunk up 'ole rivers."

"Law!" I says, "I 'opes he won't be a-comin' none of them games over 'ere, cos I'm sure meat's quite dear enuf, and if he's got a appetite like that we shall all be a-starvin', and some one did ought to tell him not to go a-tryin' to drink the Tems dry, for he'll be pisoned, the same as all the fish 'as been, if he goes near the main drainage, let alone the gas works and all the other filth as they lets parties throw into, as is nearly as bad as a dead rat in our cistern, and were all that gal's stupid ways, a-leavin' of the lead off, for rats is reglar ravenus for water, and would drink a river dry, the same as them Pershuns."

"Well," says Brown, "arter all, them Pershuns couldn't 'ave been much account in the fightin' way, for they was all turned back by a mere 'andful of Greeks."

"Ah!" I says; "but then them Greeks is that deceitful as they can circumvent any one, the same as poor Mrs. Weeble, as let lodgin's in Poplar to 'em, as killed a sheep in 'er front kitchen, a-swimmin' in ile, and reglar stunk the place with garlic, and left 'er in debt. So I don't 'old with no Greeks."

"Ah!" says Brown, "they did get 'em into a narrer place, so as they couldn't get by."

“ Ah ! ” I says, “ jest the same as I stopped that willin Portlock, as wanted to brain 'is wife with the carvin' knife, and were runnin' upstairs arter 'er jest as I stepped out of the fust-floor back, and stopped my lord with the warming-pan, as it's a mussy as Mr. Coppin 'ad 'ad 'is bed warmed over night, thro' a nasty chill as he got a-lookin' at the troops a-goin' to the Crimeer in a easterly wind, and the gal 'ad forgot to bring it down, but left in the fire-place all night.”

Not as I meant to strike Portlock with it, but if he would rush upstairs, and get it full butt, as the sayin' is, on the top of 'is 'ead, as sent 'im backard, felled like a hox, and lay there 'arf stunned; but quite cured 'im of the carvin'-knife, as he 'adn't no right to use, thro' bein' my property when we let the front kitchen, as we was glad to do, and all the 'ouse besides, thro' Brown and me bein' that 'ard up as will drive anyone to lettin' lodgin's or anything else; as I often thinks when I sees parties a-rollin' in wealth, in their carriages, all painted up, as is the rewards of wice; and then there's wirtue, as is its own reward, as the sayin' is, a-traipsin' along the streets with no 'eels to your bcots, and your gownd all draggled in the mud, and tho' I'm better off now, I often thinks of 'ow I 'ave been put to it for a shillin', and am glad of it now, for I've seen wot others suffers, and found out

them as was true 'arts, and were that grateful for kindness like them young couple as I let my parlours to, as nothink but real distress would drive me into, for if there's a thing as I 'ates to see, it's a bed-room in a back parlour, and never wouldn't 'ave done, but for bein' that drove for to make up that money, as the werry sight of a lawyer's letter turns me as sick as a dog, as the sayin' is ; and I'm sure there's many a sleepless night I've 'ad over that money, as we never got a farthin' on, but only to oblige a friend, as it's wot we all did ought to do ; tho' not with a wife and five children a-'angin' on to you ; but then, in course, if you don't 'elp others, why, you can't espect it yourself, when your own turn comes, as it must, sooner or later ; but as to owin' money, it's like a reglar judgment a-'angin' over you constant, and makes you tremble in your shoes, as the sayin' is ; and the way as I've woke up the fust thing in the mornin', with it in my 'ead the last thing at night, why, it's a wonder I weren't worn to a shadder, only it didn't take that turn with me, for I seemed to get stouter every day, as is wot grief will do with some people ; for I'm sure when Mrs. Grange berried Grange, she were a thin figger, but within a year couldn't 'ardly turn round in 'er own bar ; but then, certingly, he were a great weight took off her mind, as 'is end were drink, as will often go into the body, cos, in course, it must go

somewheres, and wot don't pison fattens, as the sayin' is; but, law, there's no tellin' about fat, as it don't prove nothink, the same as this 'ere Claimint, as might 'ave been quite as lusty as he is, and been a barrernite all the same, cos there was Alderman Wittles, he were over nineteen stone, but then he was only a knight, as in course we all knows aint up to a barrernite for rankness, tho' I 'ave knowed parties as looked down on a knight, as don't show a proper sperrit, for we none on us knows wot we may come to afore we dies, the same as that there charitable miss, as they went and made a barrenness on agin 'er will, as parties is always a-askin' me if I'm the Mrs. Brown as is always goin' about along with 'er.

I says "Bless your 'art, no;" not but wot I've 'eard say as she've done a deal of good, and is werry much looked up to, as is always the way with them as 'ave got plenty to give; not as I could waste my time with no barrenness, as 'ave lots on my 'ands, tho' my family is growed up and no longer obligated to do nothink, as in course, our little bit of property makes us easy, let alone Brown a-pickin' up somethink with them steam ingins, as is 'is pride and pleasure too, tho' it do take 'im away from 'ome a deal too much, as in course, he feels, tho' not one to take it to 'art.

But as I was a-sayin, Brown he'd got to make up

the money, as was five-and-forty pounds, and everythink as I 'ad by me went for to get it, and my dear mother's silver teapot was in for nearly three years, along with a punch ladle as 'ad a Queen Anne's guinea stuck in the bottom, as I did not think ever to see agin; and we'd three children as were on my 'ands, as the sayin' is.

So I says, "Brown," I says one evenin', "we could easy let the parlours," as was 'andsome rooms, thro' a-livin' constant in the front kitchen, "and with three bed-rooms we could manage well."

So he says, "You won't make nothink by it."

"Well," I says, "eight shillings is what I should ask, and firing fourpence the skuttle," which is doin' as you'd be done by, for our skuttle is small and coals not heavy in price just then.

He says, "You can try it on; but I den't suppose any one will care about this for a lodgin'."

I says, "The 'ouse is clean and wholesome, and a pleasant look-out behind, where they was a-cut-tin' through the clay for the new railroad.

So I puts up a bill when I'd cleaned the windows next day, and puts up a clean blind; but, law bless you, the windows got dirty over and over again—and so did the blind and the bill; but no one never even knocked at the door for to ask the terms, as preaps wasn't wonderful as it wasn't no thorough-fare.

So I says to Mrs. Upton, as is the baker's wife at the corner, "Would you mind me a-puttin' a bill in your winder for to say as there is genteel lodgings down the street?"

I don't think as four days passed, it certainly were not a-week, when as I was a-cleanin' out my bed-room I see a young gentleman a-walkin' up and down a-lookin' up at the windows, and at last he crosses the street and knocks a little hasty tap like at our door; it give me quite a turn, but I 'urries for to ask 'is pleasure.

He says, "What are your apartments?"

I says, "Parlours; please step in and see them."

He seem fidgety like, and looked quite the gentleman, tho' pale with a glass in 'is eye. At first he wouldn't walk in but I persuaded 'im not to stand in the draught, for he didn't look at all strong: so in he comes and says, "Very nice, how much a week?"

I says, "Eight shillin's—without fires." I says "If I may be so bold, is it for yourself?" as was just the sort of lodger I should 'ave liked, out all day and givin' no trouble.

He seemed a little bit confused and says, "No, not exactly; it's for a lady."

"Oh!" I says, "indeed," rather cool for to

tell the truth I don't much care about ladies ; but I says, "is it a young or old lady ?

"Oh !" he says, "quite young."

So I looks at im rather 'ard, and see 'im change colour a bit, leastways so I fancied.

Well I thought I'd settle it at once, so I says, "I requires first-rate reference, such as I gives."

He only says, "Of course," and wishes me good-mornin', a-sayin' as I should 'ear from him.

So I says, "Good mornin'," well knowin' what hearin' from parties means.

I'm sure it was more then ten days arter, it could not a been a fortnight, because I know I 'adn't 'ad a wash, and the parlour blinds was a-lookin' what I calls grubby, when a light knock come at the door, and when I opened there stood a sweet-lookin' young girl, she wasn't more than seventeen, I should say. I don't think as ever I did see such golden 'air, and such blue eyes, tho' she looked pale, her clothes wasn't shabby, but they wasn't new by no means ; she'd a little black glazy bag in 'er 'and, and she asks me almost in a tremble about the lodgin's.

So I says, "My dear, are they for yourself ?"

"Yes," she says.

I says, "Not to live alone in."

"Yes," she says, "but I'm out nearly all day."

So I shakes my 'ead mentionally, a-thinkin' as that would never do.

Well, she set 'erself down in the parlour and says, "I'd wish you'd let me stop, for I'm tired to death."

I says, "What! and no reference nor luggage."

She says, "I've got money," and she puts down two sovereigns on the table, "and as to my luggage, I've left it at the cloak-room at the railway station."

I looks at 'er agin, and see as she was faint, so I gets 'er the least drop of brandy and water, and made 'er lay down, and pulls off 'er gloves, as was mended very neat, and there I see a weddin' ring.

I says, "You don't mean to say as you're married?"

"Yes," she says, in a fainty tone.

"Oh!" I says, "indeed, that alters the case;" but I says, "where is your good gentleman."

"Oh," says she, "I'll let 'im know when I'm settled; I feel so ill, I've come by the train."

I says, "Whatever brought you 'ere."

So she says as she 'eard speak of my lodgin's bein' that clean.

I really did not know what to do as I see as she was gettin' very low.

So I sent Mrs. Tweedie, as 'appened to 'ave come in with the manglin, for Mr. 'Turton, as lives in the road, as 'appened to drive down to opposite just at that moment, thro' 'is attendin' Mrs. Liversuch, as 'er 'usband is a clerk at a distillery in the Bow Road, and three nice children as ever you see.

Mr. Turton he comes in, and as soon as he see that young person, he gives me a wink as meant the passage.

So I follers 'im out, and as soon as the door was closed, I asks 'im,—

“ Whatever can I do ? ”

He says, “ Don't lose no time, get 'er 'ome.”

I says, “ She ain't got no 'ome, she wants to lodge here.”

He says, “ You know nothing of 'er.”

I say, “ Nothing.”

“ When did she come in,” says he.

“ Half an 'our ago,” says I.

“ Well,” he says, “ if you're a-goin' thro' with it, let 'er stop and get 'er to bed ; ” but he says, “ it's between that and the workhouse.”

I went back into the room and when I see 'er lovely 'air a-hangin' back over the sofy, and pretty face that pale, with 'er lips ashes, and 'er eyelids a-quiverin', I says to myself, “ Never ; I couldn't do

it, she may be no good, but turn 'er into the work-house I couldn't, was it ever so."

Well, I gets Mrs. Tweedie for to 'elp me with the bed in the back parlour, and lighted a fire and got 'er to bed.

I've seen a good deal in my time, but never see anything like that poor young thing. How she did talk to be sure, and sometimes she'd sing, and then she kep' callin' me aunt, and sayin', as "Fitz was comin' soon."

When Brown comes in he was put out at my takin' in any one chance like; but when Mr. Turton told 'im 'ow things was, he said, "all right," and took the children round to 'is sister for the night. I never left that poor girl all the rest of that day, and about seven o'clock I do think as I never set eyes on such a lovely infant.

Mr. Turton says, "He's a model!" I says "That he is." But, law! we 'adn't much time to think of 'im, for 'is poor ma was frightful bad, ravin' like for ever so long, as was no doubt brought on by fatigue.

I think it must 'ave been about eleven; I'd just got things a little straight, and the poor young woman was quiet, tho' she kep' moanin' uneasy like, when I 'eard a little knockin' at the parlour winder.

At first I thought it might be thieves, then it

struck me as it might be some one to the young lady. So I goes quiet to the front door, and there I finds standin' that same young gentleman as 'ad come to look at the lodgin's with the eye-glass. I see it all at once.

So I says, "Wot did you please to want?"

"Oh!" he says, "does Mrs. Fitzpatrick lodge 'ere?"

I says, "I don't know no such a name."

He says, "She told me she was comin' to live 'ere."

"Oh! indeed," says I. "Then she told you wrong.

But he says, "I think I'm right."

I says, "Wot's she like?"

Says he, "Young and slim."

"With no luggage?" says I; "and golden 'air?" says I.

"Yes!" says he.

Then I says, "Are you 'er 'usband?"

"Why, yes!" says he.

"Then," I says, "walk in, and you did ought to 'ave been ashamed of yourself to 'ave let 'er come out alone, as is a mercy she's alive."

He staggered like, and says, "What's the matter?"

"Matter?" says I; "matter enough. The idea of her bein' out alone!"

He says, "Tell me what you mean." So I leads

the way to the parlour, where I'd got the infant in my bassinet.

I says, "There's your child, as might be in the work'ouse for all you knowed or preaps cared."

That young man stared at that infant as if it 'ad been a wild beast.

He says, "I don't understand. Where's the lady?"

I says, "Hush! In there. You may peep thro' the door at 'er."

He did, and was a-goin' to have rushed in, only I 'eld 'im back, I says, "If you wake her up sudden, she's a dead woman."

Says he, "Is she so very ill?"

"Well," I says, if you'd come three hours ago, I should 'ave said she was a-goin' 'ome fast. But," I says, "Mr. Turton thinks as now there's 'opes."

"But," I says, "wherever is 'er things?"

He says, "I don't know."

"Well," I says, "you are a pretty 'usband!"

He says, "I've not seen 'er for six months."

"Not seen 'er for six months? Why, are you a seafarin' man? You don't look like one."

He says, "Not exactly."

Well, I begin to see as things was quisy. So I says, "Wotever you may be, get 'er things for 'er. And," I says, "how about the baby."

So he pulls out a little purse, and gives me a sovereign. He says, "Will that get it anything? and I'll give you some more to-morrow."

I says, a-smilin', "I can't go out a-shoppin' to-night."

Well, by that time he 'ad stuck 'is glass in 'is eye, and looked at the child as I wanted 'im to take; but he was quite frightened, and when I come to see 'im, was only a boy 'isself.

So I says, "You're a young 'usband and father."

He says, "I am indeed."

I says, "I can't make out why she come 'ere."

"Why," he says, "I wrote 'er that yours were the nicest lodgin's as I 'ad seen for the money, and so they are."

"Why didn't you come with 'er," says I.

"Because," said he, "when she wrote and said she must come to town, she didn't tell me why, and didn't say by what train. I've been waitin' at the station since eight o'clock, as she said she should come in the evenin'."

"'As she come far?" I says.

"Only from Romford."

"Wot!" I says; "so near as that, and you never see her for six months?"

He says, "I only come back from foreign parts a fortnight ago."

"Well," I says, "if my 'usband was to come from foreign parts, and stop in London a fortnight afore comin to see me, I shouldn't think much of 'im."

I couldn't 'elp a-feelin' for 'im, for I see he was dreadful cut up, and well he might be, to see that poor young gal on the bed a-moanin', with me a-puttin' vinegar and water constant to 'er 'ead. He gave me 'is word as he 'adn't no idea about the baby, and didn't seem to know what to do.

Mr. Turton looked in between twelve and one, and said as she was no worse, but told that young man as there was great dangers still.

I don't know 'owever that night was got thro'; for what with that young man a-goin' on, walkin' the room wringin' 'is 'ands, and that poor young creature a-layin' there in a stupor, I didn't know what to do.

I was thankful when he went off in the mornin' to fetch 'er things; and when he come back I made 'im go and give 'isself a little rest, and when he got up arter, a bit of a wash, he looked the gentleman all over; and by that time she'd took a turn and was more 'erself; but Mr. Turton says, "Wotever you do, don't flurry 'er."

In the afternoon she was a deal better, and that young gentleman went out, and said he'd be back in the evenin', as he were; and when he comes in, I

says, "I've got good news. She's quite 'erself, and 'as asked for you in the name of Alfred."

He says, "All right. I'll go to 'er."

"Now," I says, "wotever you do, keep 'er quiet."

So he promises, and I goes into the room, and says, "My dear, 'ere's a gentleman as wants to say 'ow d'ye do?'"

She turned deadly white, and tried for to get out of bed; so I catches 'old of 'er, and says, "No, no, my dear."

Well, 'earin' of me speak, he come in, and I never did see such a meetin' as that. When I see 'er stretch out 'er arms to 'im, as was alyblaster for whiteness, and see 'er 'air fall all over 'er lovely white neck, as she sat up in the bed, and saw them lovin' eyes of 'ern beam light when she see 'im, and then the way as he flung 'isself on 'is knees beside the bed and clasped 'er to his 'art, a-sayin' such lovin' words, I thought my 'eart would 'ave broke, and if I 'adn't been wedged in thro' 'oldin' 'er up, I should have run away.

So I says, "You mustn't take on like this, my dears; it won't never do."

He sobbed as tho' 'is 'art would break and kep' sayin', "Forgive me;" and every time he said so she kissed 'im more fond than ever.

So I slips away and gets the infant and puts it

into 'er arms, and never did I see a prettier picture than them three made.

But, law, it didn't last long, for she soon turned dead faint agin, and when Mr. Turton see 'er in the evenin' she were not so well, as he said was over excitement,

I says, "You'll escuse me Mr. T., but it's no use talkin' she aint got no constitution for to battle against it, she'll never leave that bed," no more she never did; she know'd she was dyin', and 'ad the minister as christened the baby. I rather think she was of the Irish persuasion, not as I asked, but if you'd seen that poor young man's grief, it was that violent as nothing wasn't ever like it; he used to sit by 'er bedside 'oldin' 'er 'and for 'ours, and as long as he was with 'er she was easy, she didn't seem ever to take to the baby, and as to 'im he used to turn away from it.

It was on a Sunday evening as she died, just three weeks and two days after she come to my 'ouse, as is one reason why I won't ever take no one in on a Friday.

She called me to 'er and give me a kiss, a-sayin' as she thanked me, and that God would reward me; she says, "Let me see the boy," as was that weight as she couldn't lift, and all on milk and water. So I 'eld 'im to 'er, for, bless you, the poor

young man 'adn't the strength of a fly, and she says "He'll be well took care on I know," and she kissed him very gently, and said "Take'im away please," and then she throwed 'er arms round 'er 'usband's neck, she gave way awful. Oh, it went to my 'eart to 'ear 'im a-sayin' to 'er, "Oh, pray live for me;" and then he'd clench his fist. So I says to 'im, "Don't disturb 'er like that—let 'er die in your arms, as she did wish to."

He seemed more quiet for the minnit, 'as he took 'er up gently from the pillow as the breath was leavin' 'er body, and when she was gone, the cry of agony as he gave way to will never get out of my 'ead.

It was all right, poor dear; they'd been married, run away like, thro' 'im bein' at a tutor's, where in my opinion they makes a deal too free, and she a school-gal, as taught music.

I'm sure I'd a nice scene at my place the day after she died, for 'is mother come down, all the bounce, just as the poor gal's mother was a-goin', for he'd been and fetched her when all was over from Blackheath. One was a fine woman I must say, but no lady, tho' dressed 'andsome, and come in 'er brougham. She bounces into the place and says, "Where's my son? A nice disgrace he's been to me;" but she says, "I've come to fetch 'im away from this den."

I couldn't stand that, so I says, "Who are you callin' a den; this is my 'ouse, and a respectable one as 'as sheltered your flesh and blood, as might be in the workhouse."

She was a-goin' to bounce agin I could see, so I says, "If you're a woman 'old your tongue," and I says, "look here," and opens the foldin' door, and there she lay, like a sweet angel with 'er lovely 'ands crossed as tho' she were a-prayin', and he was kneelin' by 'er side in a agony of sorrers. But 'er mother, she was the mildest and sweetest creature tho' that poor, as touched you to see 'er so shabby. But, law, she soon shet Mrs. Bounce up; for she took 'er by the 'and and says to 'er, "No reproaches now; don't dare to punish where a higher power 'as already done so; if I can forgive 'im surely you may."

I never did see such a change as there come over that proud woman. She says, "Oh! my boy, my poor dear boy, won't you come to me; it's all my fault," and when he turned 'is face, deadly pale, with eyes that bloodshot, and his mother give a scream, and held out 'er arms to 'im, as he flung 'isself into 'em and cried till 'is 'eart was fit to burst, as did 'im good no doubt; and they took 'er away to bury 'er, and left the infant with me till nearly eighteen months old, and they did used to come and

see 'im very often, and tho' a proud woman, his mother 'ad a 'art, and when that young man used to come to see his boy, for to see that pale-faced lad shed tears over 'im regular upset me, that it did; and one time as he come he told me he was a-goin' to Madery for 'is 'ealth, as I says "Is a fine strengthening thing to the stomach if you gets it old," but he said "it were the place," which I never heard on.

I never see 'im no more, for he died that next winter, and as to that child, he's over six foot now, and took and kissed me afore all the family, when they wrote and asked me to come, and see 'im, as was 'ome, on leave from Indier, as 'ad always come to see me every 'ollidays; as certainly did owe 'is life to me and baked flour, as I will always say is a fine thing for the motherless, not but wot the cow 'ad a 'and in it; and if ever there were a 'onest woman over 'er milk, it was Mrs. Attleberry, as 'ad seven Aldernies, and two with crumpled 'orns, as they do say always gives the best milk.

But, as I says to Brown, it's jest as well as that there Shar 'ave see the herrers of 'is ways, as the sayin' is, and sent them three fieldmales back, as I see in the paper, 'cos in course, Queen Wictoria could not, and would not set down with sich parties, as won't let no one as 'ave got a fly-blowed repiti-

tion come even into 'er drorin'-room, and quite right too, cos wherever is the use of be'avin' like a lady, if you're a-goin' to be mixed up with trumpery; as I says to Mrs. Telberry, when 'er dorter wanted to marry 'er sister's widderer, "Well," I says, "it aint law, nor yet gospel ncither, and in course if she will do it, must expect to be looked down on," and would 'ave gone to church with 'im, and she did too, and were stopped at the werry hedge of the halter, thro' some one a-tellin' the minister, as shet 'is book up in a instant; and it's well he did, for she found out as he'd got a family a-ready, and were only goin' to marry 'er as he did 'er sister afore 'er, to get hold of the bit of money as they'd got thro' their grandfather, as was a timber-merchant, a-shows wot double dealing will bring a man to.

But as to this 'ere [Shar, he seems to be a rantipole lot, with all them dimons all over 'im, as some says as he 'adn't better trust 'isself in Seven Dials along with, but he'd be as safe there as in Queen Wictoria's own drorin'-room, for there's such a-scramblin' and crowdin' there, that ladies 'as their laces all broke and tore, and loses their dimons, as 'ave been swep up in the dust pan afore now, as 'is nice pickin's for the 'ousemaids, tho' in course they'd 'ave to give 'em up if the Lord Chamberlin were to know it; as is

werry partikler about the Queen's drorin'-room, and who comes in there, and well he may be, as Queen Wictoria 'ave always set a good example 'erself, and aint one to let no nasty painted up 'ussies come in as bold as brass; and so that's 'ow the Shar got the straight tip as it wouldn't do for 'im to come in with a wife on each arm, and one a-follerin', a-sayin', "Good mornin', Queen, 'ere's my three faverits, and if you likes them I can send for the rest."

I think I can 'ear Queen Wictoria a-sayin', givin' of the bell a good pull, "Send for a cab for Mr. Shar this instant, and let it be a four-wheeler, for they can't all go in a 'Ansom," as would make 'im look werry foolish, and serve 'im right.

In course, if they 'ad come, they'd not 'ave gone near Queen Victoria, and no doubt, poor things, might 'ave come right, thro' bein' took to one of them midnight meetin's, where the Parsons gives 'em tea and coffee, and carries 'em off in cab-loads to the refuge for the destitutes, as is noble institutions.

I'm glad as this 'ere Shar is a-comin', as no doubt all them bishops will talk to werry proper about 'is ways, and then he'll 'ave to go to Scotland; and if he don't listen to the bishops, he'll be sure to like the Scotch persuasion, as will preach to him by the 'our together in one of them nice

cheerful-lookin' kirks, where they all sings at once to no orgin, and he won't find no goin's on as aint proper, as will show 'im wot a good thing wirtue is, and 'ow it brings its own reward, cos look 'ow the Scotch have prospered, and all thro' bein' that good the same as the English.

I do think as that Shar is a-goin' at a 'and gallop, tho' in course he don't care much about the Rooshuns nor yet the Prooshuns, but will be nat'rally all of a 'urry to get 'ere, as can wusship what he likes. Brown says as he don't wusship fire.

I says, "More shame for him then, if it's 'is religion he did ought to stick to it."

But Brown says he's pretty nigh the same way of thinkin' as them Turks, and they certingly do 'ave a lot of wives, as is why I never could make out 'ow it were as the Prince of Wales ever come to take 'is good lady there.

I'm sure the books as Brown 'ave been and read about Pershur is enuf to turn any one's 'ead, and I'm pretty certing as soon as ever that Shar arrives as Brown will be sent for to come and talk to 'im, cos I don't believe as no one won't know more about 'im, and Queen Wictoria will be glad to 'ave any come as can 'elp for to keep the game a-goin', cos tho', in course, she can speak Pershun 'erself, she can't 'ave the time to read all about it the same as Brown 'ave done.

But, law, it makes one's 'ead quite swim when you thinks wot that poor man's got to go thro'.

Why, he'll 'ave to stop with Queen Wictoria for months, and it's lucky as she don't want Buckenham Pallis, 'cos it's werry inconwenient to 'ave a wisitor when you aint got more than room for your own family; and in course she can't go a-puttin' of them two young people up in the garrets, partikler thro' Prince Leepold bein' that delicate and Princess Beetriss quite growed up, as must be werry lively up in Scotland jest as everythink is a-goin' on in London; but no doubt she reglar enjoys 'earin' Doctor M'Drawley a-talkin' at dinner arter 'is sermon, and then she certingly do see the servants a-dancin' and enjoyin' theirselves, as is the only balls as Queen Wictoria can bring 'erself to bear the sight on; but they'll 'ave to come back now at once, they say, jest to see this 'ere Shar; not but wot 'is jewels must be worth seein', and 'ow he can walk under 'em, I can't think.

It's a good thing for them as sells that Pershun sherbet in the streets, cos that'll be all the go, no doubt; and I only 'opes as none of them young swells won't go a-takin' on it the same as that boy Alfred persuaded me to, as he said the proper way were to put a good spoonful of the powder into your mouth, and then wash it down with a good glass of water.

So, in course not a-knowin' nothink of them Pershun ways, I took a good dessert spoonful, and put it in my mouth, and then takes a good gulp of water.

Never to my dyin' day shall I feel sich a shock as it give me, as knocked me back'ards agin the dresser, a-settin' me down on the pot-board.

It was for all the world as if the powder-mills 'ad gone off in my chest, and it's a wonder it didn't blow the roof off my mouth.

It was 'ours afore I got over it; and if that Alfred didn't say as he told me partikler not to take it like that, as 'ad pretty nigh been the death of a young boy in their street, whereas I can take my solemn Davy, as the sayin' is, that he said, "Oh! aunt, if you're that thirsty, you'll find Pershun sherbet that squinchin'; only drink it while it's in a evernescent state before the fizzin' goes off, jest like shampan.

I'm sure it weren't like shampain wot I suffered, as was spavins enuf to kill a dray-'orse; and as to them Pershuns, if they're obligated to drink that stuff, and aint allowed to touch no wine, why, no wonder they dies by thousands famishin', for I'm sure I'd rather die than take another dose of that.

Brown says they did die by millions, cos they couldn't get no rice, as, I says, shows they're a reglar ignorant lot, cos it's downright madness to

sulk over your wittles like that, tho' I well remembers old Kernel Colepepper, as were a reglar old Injin Tartar, a-sendin' a soup plate slap across the table at 'is wife's 'ead, cos there wasn't rice biled proper for 'is curry, as it's a mussy it only knocked off 'er turbin and front, and ketched the butler in the pit of the stomick, as were 'elpin' 'er to a glass of Madeery, and made 'im drop the bottle, as were like drinkin' melted gold, and cost eighteen shillins a bottle thro' 'avin' doubled the Cape twice, as they said; and I says you may double your Cape fifty times, in my opinion, as won't never make it worth drinkin', as 'ave a nasty earthy flavour, tho' it's a thing as you never 'ears on now, tho' I must say as I 'ave tasted South African quite as bad, tho' I'd rather drink that any day than any of that beastly blowin'-up sherbet.

Brown he come into tea one evenin', and says, "There's a 'ole somewheres about this 'ere Shar a-comin', for they do say as Queen Wictoria won't send 'er own steam-yott over for 'im."

I says, "And quite right too, as is no doubt kep' beautiful, as I've 'eard say as is under the command of 'er own 'arf brother's son by the mother's side, as is a reglar prince, and in course feels it a 'oner for to 'ave to take 'is royal aunt and cousins all about, but don't want to be a-dancin' attendance on a dirty Shar, as will set cross-legged a-spittin' all

over the quartered deck, as is agin the rules, and more than the Prince of Wales dared to do; for 'is ma she'd take and 'ave 'im put in irons in a jiffey, not but wot she dotes on 'im, but she'd show 'er power, and order the Duke of Edinburrer a round dozin, cos in course she's the 'ead of the navy, jest the same as the harmy and the 'Stablished Church; as is why all the bishops falls down before 'er for to do 'er 'omige; as is why the Dissenters won't be bishops, cos they don't 'old with sich ways; not as any on 'em ever was reglar asked, and refused; cos, if you comes to that, wotever were the Archbishop but a Dissenter? And there's Dr. Binney, at the Way 'Ouse, he might 'ave been a bishop—leastways he said as he were at the same college with one on 'em, as knowed which side 'is bread were buttered on, as the sayin' is, so come over to the Church; not but wot some Dissenters gets quite as much as a bishop, as I 'ave 'eard say is one of Mr. Spurjin's boasts; and quite right, too. I'm sure, if I 'ad all that talkin' to do over in 'is Tabernacle, I'd be well paid for it.

Brown he kep' on a-readin' and a-bustin' out, so I says, "Wotever is a-upsettin' of your apple-cart, Mr. Brown?"

"Why," he says, "I aint patience to read sich mean ways."

"Why," I says, "what do you mean?"

"Why," he says, "here's a Member of Parlyment a-givin' notice as he's a-goin' to move as Queen Wictoria shall be told as Parlyment will pay 'er back the money as she's out of pocket by this 'ere Shar's wisit."

I says, "And quite right too. A nice 'ole it would make in 'er money if she 'ad to pay all that espence, as in course he'll expect to 'ave everythink like he's used to over there, and in course, tho' he 'ave brought millions of money, she can't ask 'im to put 'is 'and into 'is pocket, not even for a turnpike when they're a-ridin' out together, or even a glass of ale and a bisket, as he might fancy."

Brown says, "Oh! do dry up with your rubbish."

I says, "You may call it rubbish, but I knows werry well when I were a-stayin' down in the country with Liza's friends, 'er father-in-law never would let me pay a farthin' when a-drivin' out in 'is shay-cart;" as is wot made me feel that wexed at a-goin' out with them, when they was up in town, and leavin' my portmoney behind on the dresser, so they paid everythink from St. Paul's to the Christshul Pallis, includin' of the 'Ouses of Parlyment, as made me feel that mean; so I can feel for Queen Wictoria a-'avin' to say, "Escuse me, Shar, but I aint got no small change; so would you mind a-payin' for the srimps?" as he might fancy at

Gravesend; the same as that Madame Blamire, as come over 'ere from Paris, and were that independent, and brought 'ome wilks for 'er own supper in 'er pocket, cos forriners is so curious. And as to that woman, the things as she'd say she'd seen, I never did, when she 'adn't been within miles of 'em; the same as that day as I couldn't go out with her, and she come back a-blowin' about 'avin' see the Christshul Pallis, and only been gone under two 'ours.

So I says to 'er, "Escuse me, madame, but 'owever did you get there and back in the time?"

"Oh!" she says, "the omlihus."

I says, "Never; they don't run."

She says, "Ah! yes. I know 'im, as was only tuppence."

If I 'adn't knowed 'er 'abits, I should 'ave said as she'd been and 'ad a drop, for she stuck to it; and it wasn't till we was at supper as it come into my 'ead as she meant that there Christshul Pallis place close agin the Regency Circus.

Not as she would be set right, as were 'er depth, cos in course she wanted to go back to Paris and blow about what she'd seen, and would like to say as she didn't think much of none of the sights, cos she were always a-runnin' London down agin Paris, as she said we were that envious on as we wanted to see it burnt down by the Prooshuns.

I says, "I'm sure we didn't want nothink of the sort."

She reglar lost 'er temper over it, and says, "Ah! wait till that wile wretch Beesmark come and conker you, and then see 'ow the French shal' larf."

I says, "Let 'em; we don't care. And," I says, "as to Beastmark, he's werry brave a-bullyin' them as is weak, but let 'im touch us, that's all."

She says, "The French was not weak."

"Ah!" I says, "but he knowed 'ow to square it with them as was in power, and no doubt them as 'elped 'im was well paid for it. But," I says, "don't let's talk no pollytics, as will lead to words."

Cos she's all for the Commune, as, if I'd 'ave knowed, she shouldn't never 'ave darkened my doors; but only slep' two nights and I don't think I shall never see 'er no more, thro' partin' arter 'igh words, thro' me a-sayin' as them as burnt down a place with petroleum did ought to be blowed from a gun.

Brown he couldn't get over that there Queen Wictoria not 'avin' money enuf allowed 'er to keep no company. "As," I says, "throws a light over everythink, and is why she lives in the country, poor soul, and can't keep up 'er town-'ouse, the same as I've 'eard say were the way with some of the nobility; but," I says, "no doubt Parlyment will 'elp

'er, if it's only lettin of 'er draw 'er next quarter in advance; not as she's the woman to do it, for she'd never outrun the constable, as the sayin' is, as would be a bad esample for 'er young people."

Says Brown, "I don't know what we're ever a-goin' to get out of the Pershuns, as we should make sich a fuss over this 'ere Shar."

"Law," I says, "poor fellow, arter comin' so far, it would be 'ard if we wasn't civil to 'im, and besides, some day, when Queen Wictoria goes over to Indier, as no doubt she will, as soon as ever the railway is open all the way, why, she may 'ave to stop somewheres in Pershur for to take in water, or preaps grease 'er weels, as will get werry 'ot a-goin' on for a week constant, besides a-wantin' to stop and 'ave a look at the country."

"Ah!" says Brown, "it'll be a long day afore we sees that railway done; not as it's impossible, only we didn't ought to 'ave let the French get 'old on it."

"Ah," I says, "we'd better look out, cos if they gets the start on us by rail, there's no knowin' where they'll stop, as might get up some fine mornin' and find as they'd put us all in the black 'ole, and took away Indier from us; as is nothing better than stolen goods, as we've been receivin' ourselves."

I says, "Preaps that's the reason as this Shar

is a-comin' for to ask Queen Wictoria not to come and take Pershur from 'im. Cos in course he don't know, poor, dear lady, as she aint got no 'and in it, as them ministers might get 'er to sign anythink all of a 'urry, jest as she's a-goin' off to Scotland, or somewhere, and then read in the paper the next day as she's been and made war agin somebody as she 'adn't never 'eard on."

Cos that's wot 'ave been done afore now, leastways, that's 'ow they say them parties was all massacred at Glencoe, in Scotland; as I've been to the place myself, thro' that there Dutch beast of a king William a-signin' of the wrong paper, as shows as we didn't ought to 'ave no forriners for kings, as in course don't know English, and might sign anythink unawares.

"Well," says Brown, "you'll 'ave to get your best bib and tucker ready, Martha, for this 'ere Shar, he's a-comin' sooner than were expected, and they'll 'ave to fetch the Queen back from Scotland all of a 'urry."

"Law," I says, "that's 'im a showin' of 'is temper, cos we wouldn't 'ave none of his dolly mops, so in course he wants to cut the wisit short, but 'ow werry ill convenient for Queen Wictoria to 'ave to come 'ome all of a 'urry, and all the carpets up at Windsor, and, no doubt, 'ad the sweeps, now as the fires is over, and as to Buckenham Pallis, it's

lucky as they 'ad the King and Queen of the Belgjums there, as 'ave aired the beds, or it might 'ave cost the Shar 'is eyesight, if not 'is life, for nothink ain't more dangerous than a damp bed, partikler to any one as is used to a warm climate."

"But," I says, "I do 'ope as he've give Queen Wictoria time enuf to come away comfortable, and not bring 'er things away rough dried, nor nothing like that, tho' in course wearin' black constant do make a family's washin' come light; but yet don't make much difference arter all, when you come to fine things, as is wot old Queen Charlotte did used always to get up for 'erself, thro' 'avin' been brought up in that line, and quite right too, for I'm sure I wouldn't hever trust my caps nor collars to no one, when they was wore with deep borders, as is all out of fashion now, and looked a deal better than your 'air in a net, not as I can bear to see anyone as is well on in life without a somethin on the 'ead, partikler when the 'air is a-gettin' thin behind the ears.

"But," I says to Brown, "wotever will they want sich a lot of money to spend over this 'ere Shar, as it couldn't 'ave cost much the time as that Sultin came, as was only a garding party and a review, thro' not bein' one as is given to dancin', not as I considers as that is much to 'is credit,

cos it's only laziness as 'll set by the 'our, cross-legged, a-smokin'."

I do 'ope as some one will give this Shar a 'int over 'is ways, cos I'm sure as them Turks ain't fit t be let loose in a decent place, as 'll be sure to set to and wash theirselves in them fountings in Trafalgar Square, as is wot they'll think as they're made for, jest the same as I've see 'em myself over there in Egyp', as the perlice would pretty soon collar 'em if they was to come any of them games; and I do believe if Queen Wictoria 'ad see as much of 'em as I 'ave, she'd 'ave put the kibosh on their coming.

I knowed a party myself as 'ad been in the Pershun Gulf, as the steamer he were aboard went down in a tycoon, and only three on 'em saved with nothink but their shirts, as was sent 'ome by the consul, thro' bein' washed overboard, and he always said as them Pershuns was a 'arf-starved lot, as is a shame, when you comes to think as this ere Shar is a-rollin' in riches, as must be a reglar dog in the mangy, to spend all this money over a journey, and leave them at 'ome to starve, as is like old Jarvis the tanner, as would go over to Greenwich and 'ave whitebait and all manner, and leave 'er and the children at 'ome over the bladebone of a shoulder of mutton, as there wasn't nothink 'ardly to be got off on, and 'ad to make

up with a 'east dumplin', and the gal only got a red 'errin'; but it come 'ome to him, a greedy beast, for he were choked with a fish bone, as werry nigh lost 'im 'is life, and would 'ave ended fatal all but for one of the waiters a-pokin' of it down 'is throat with the buck'orn 'andle of a carvin'-knife, as reglar scarified 'im, so as he couldn't swaller a cup of tea for nearly a week.

I do 'ope as that Shar 'ave left somethink at 'ome for them poor wretches to live on, and not come 'ere with a bounce over 'is millions, and preaps not the money for the water-rate left at 'ome, as is 'ow poor Mrs. Weldin come to 'ave the water cut off, jest as she 'ad lodgers come in a-starvin' for their teas, as were total abstainers; and give 'er notice on the spot for offerin' 'em a little cold without while she'd sent to borry a kettle of water from next door; but two, as was of the 'Ebrer persuasion, as couldn't draw it thro' bein' the Passover, as is the only time as they washes from 'ead to foot, and 'ad often borrowed buckets of 'er; as I don't believe as the Red Sea itself would wash some of them old Jews as I've known about Wellclose Square, as no comb couldn't never go thro' their 'air, as 'ad weak eyes and wore earrings, but would rather starve than eat a bit of pie crust as there was lard in, and certingly did relish a drop of srub and water, not as ever I

fancied them large white pickled cowcumbers, tho' I 'ave tasted their anniseed, but never fancied their pastry.

I've no doubt as this 'ere Shar would feel more at 'ome down Petticoat Lane than anywhere else, as it's my opinion is the same with all them Jews, as likes best a-wallerin' in their own ways, and tho' they do live in fine 'ouses, and never so 'appy as when they gets among the old clothes and the fried fish down by the Minories, and never feels at 'ome among their betters, poor things, as you can't never change nobody's natures; and, for my part, them Jews as I've see a-eatin' pork and a-makin' a lark over the Passover, I aint no more respect for them than for a Irishman as I sees a-pitchin' into mutton chops of a Friday, as is agin their religion, we all knows.

I don't think as ever I shall forget Mrs. O'Grady a-puttin' of 'er 'ead in accidental to the top room of Mrs. Belton's 'ouse, where the Tomlin's lodge, and ketchin' 'er 'usban' a-goin' to pitch into eggs-and-bacon of a Ash Wednesday, she didn't take and make no bones over it, but give 'im a drive on the side of the 'ead as sent the bit of bacon as he'd got on 'is fork a-flyin' across the room, and then she collars the dish and throwed the lot out of the winder, as would 'ave led to words, only they was all collared and took up by the perlice for she'd

been and throwed the dish, fat, bacon, and all into a gentleman's carridge as was blocked in the street below, and spilte all their clothes, as was a-goin' to lay the fust stone of a Baptist chapel near Radcliffe 'Ighway.

So you see it don't do to carry religion too far ; not but wot parties did ought to act up to wot they purfesses. Not as I 'olds with the Shakers' goin's on, as carries things a deal too far ; the same as the Mormons.

I never did see in all my born days a man in a wuss temper than Brown, so I says, "I don't think as you'll do much good, Mr. Brown, a-settin' there a-mutterin' cusses agin everybody, jest for all the world, like our cat with a mouse under the copper-hole."

So he says, "All as I've got to say is as papers is enuf to drive any one mad."

"Law!" I says, "but nobody don't pay no attentions to papers."

"Well, then," he says, "why do people write to 'em?"

I says, "You'd better asked why people reads 'em ; but," I says, "wots the matter?"

"Why," he says, "here's parties a-sendin' letters to say 'ow this 'ere Shar did ought to be received, when in course Government knows wot to do."

"Why," I says, "in course we've only got to do wot others 'as done."

"Wot others?" says Brown.

"Why," I says, "in course I am illudin' to the Rooshuns and Prooshuns as 'ave 'ad the fust on 'im."

"Ah!" says Brown, "but we aint got a army to show like the Rooshuns nor yet the Prooshuns."

"Well, then," I says, "let us show 'im the Wolunteers, and the Tower 'Amlets Militier, and draw up the perlice; and then why not 'ave the 'Stablished Church out with the bishops at the 'ead, and then you come to throw in the Freemasons and the Trades' Unions, and you see if they can show anythink like it in all Europe, partikler if they was to swear in a lot of special constables, the same as they did when the Chartists was a-goin' to break out that tenth of April, as aint never been 'eard on from that day to this; and I never could make out wot became on 'em all, as couldn't 'ave been mas-sacreed on the quiet and put down a drain; but would 'ave got a 'ot un if they'd 'ave tried any or their nonsense, as is jest the way as them Com-munes did ought to 'ave been served, and so they would 'ave been, only that poor old Tears he weren't up to the mark, as in course didn't know nothink; and now as they've got a reglar sojer for a head, I do 'ope as he'll give it 'era 'ot if they comes any of their games."

Says Brown, "I think, Martha, as you'd like this 'ere Shar, as is one of 'em as can do as he likes with 'is people."

I says, "And so he did ought to, or else what's the use of bein' a Shar, as is the same thing as a Zar in Roosher, and we all knows as he can do wot he likes and not be bothered with no Prime Ministers nor Parlyments, as is all a lot of rubbish."

Says Brown, "Don't you think you'd like to live in a country where you 'adn't no rights, and might be seized 'old on and took off by orders of the Shar?"

"Law," I says, "Brown, you don't mean to say as them is 'is ways?"

He says, "I do. Why," he says, "bless you, if he were a-goin' along and 'appened to see you, he might jest take it into 'is 'ead as he'd like to 'ave a look at you closer, and off you'd be took like a mere nothink, and it's a mussy as he didn't 'ave you bowstrung when he see you nearer."

I says, "Brown, wot a willin."

"Ah!" he says, "they're rum uns, them parties in the East."

"Well," I says, "I lived at the East End many a year, and, escept a row among them Malays now and then, never 'eard of no violence."

"No," says Brown; "I'm a-talkin' about the real East, as is where that Shar can do jest wot he like."

"Why," I says, "that's like wot Queen Lizzy-beth did used to do; but," I says, "I'm glad you told me, cos I'll be werry partikler all the time as the feller is 'ere, never to go out when he's a-passin' without 'avin' a blue wail twice over my face; not as he'd be likely to carry me off in a 'urry."

"No," says Brown, a-larfin', "and if he did he'd soon set you down agin."

I says, "Mr. Brown, you needn't redicule your lawful wife. I shouldn't want no puttin' down; I'd get down pretty quick, and let the willin know as he 'adn't got a lamb to deal with."

"Oh!" says Brown, "he'd soon settle that, for they eats 'em up wool and all, stewed in their own fat with saffron and garlic."

I says, "They must be beasts, and so I'd tell 'em to their faces, to serve good wittles like that; but," I says, "I must say as I'm glad he's a-comin', as Queen Wictoria will take 'im to church with 'er, and get one on 'em to speak to 'im serous over 'is ways, cos it won't never do to let 'im go back 'ome as bad as he come, tho' in course he'll have lots of tracks give 'im."

Says Brown, "Oh, bless you, he can't change 'is religion, any more than Queen Wictoria can change 'ers."

I says, "Wot nonsense you're a-talkin'. Why,"

I says, "do you mean to say as Queen Wictoria couldn't turn Jew nor nothink if she thought it were the true way?"

"No," says Brown, "she must be Church of Ingland, and so must 'er children, and 'er grand-children, or else they'd be turned out."

I says, "I can't 'ardly credit it; but, in course, if you knows it——"

He says, "In course I knows it, and so does everybody else; and if Queen Wictoria was to think the 'Stablished Church ever so wrong she must stick to it, or else give up 'er crown."

I says, "And is that wot they calls liberty of consence?"

Says Brown, "In course it is. That's civil and religious liberty."

"Well, then," I says, "I'd turn Turk if I liked, if I was a Queen, and nobody shouldn't bully me into believin' wot I didn't believe, not for all the crowns in the world, nor spectres neither. But," I says, "in course, Turks is different, tho' I've 'eard say as they're as 'ard to turn as Jews."

Any'ow, let's hope as this 'ere Shar won't take and cheek the Archbishop of Canterbury, like them 'Eathens of the Temple, as is wot they calls a church, as 'ad the impidence to say as they believed as much as some Christshuns, and a great deal more than a many;" and I must say as that there Temple

close agin Fleet Street aint much of a place for Christshuns to boast on, for there were poor Mrs. Pearman, as were laundress to Chambers there, as 'ad 'er dorter to 'elp 'er, and was nearly pisened, both on 'em, thro' jest a-tastin' of somethink as they thought were furnitur polish, and was a-goin' to use over the gentleman's sideboard as they done the rooms on, and if he didn't come 'ome and find both in convulsions on 'is 'arth rug, as proved to be sherry as he'd been and doctered, thro' a suspectin' as 'is cellarette were tampered with, and I don't think as Mrs. Pearman were the woman to do it; but there's no tellin' nor yet trustin' nobody arter the state as I see Mrs. Challin in, as I'd 'ave gone bail for willin', but yet weren't above proof, as the sayin' is, not where sperrits was concerned, as I see 'er myself, with the bottle drained dry, a-settin' on the dust-'ole a-smilin' at me, and a-singin', "My pretty Jane, ah! never look so shy," as lost my temper, and give a drive at 'er with the broom 'andle, as made 'er look pretty shy, and miss 'er tip, as the sayin' is, and roll over into Brown's cow-cumber frame, as was jest brought in new, and only put there till he come in, as I'm sure the langwidgo he used over it were enough to wither it up, plants and all.

Not as I considers Mrs. Challin a woman to drink, but yet with the painters about, flew to the

bottle, thro' my back bein' turned to keep the white lead from a-settlin' on 'er stomach, as 'ad only give the dust-'ole a coat of lead 'arf a 'our afore she took and set on it ; so can fancy the state as she were in, partikler with her eye cut agin the edge of the cowcumber frame ; not as I considers as Brown were right in wishin' as she'd knocked 'er stupid 'ead off, cos, poor soul, she is but 'uman nature arter all ; as is frail we all knows, and certingly Brown is a sober man, as I don't think I've seen 'im come 'ome more than smilin' twice in over thirty years, as is something to say, and yet no teetotaler neither, nor yet given to temperance meetin's, as no doubt will all make a fuss over this ere Shar, cos he's one on 'em ; tho' for my part I'd rather a man were given to a glass now and then, than he should be as sober as a judge, and 'ave three wives at a time, as is a houtrage on common decency, even if he does leave 'em at 'ome like this 'ere Shar, when he comes a-visitin' decent people ; and I'm sure Queen Wictoria would shet 'er door in any one's face, even if he was the Archbishop of Canterbury, if she knowed as he had more than one lawful wife, for I says, I remembers werry well a-readin' as she give the refusal flat to a nobleman as 'ad married one of them creeturs as were all paint and impidence ; and said as he should like to introduce 'er to the Princess of Wales ; as if Queen Wictoria

would 'ave let 'er know parties as aint fit to set before a queen.

I must say as I do wish as that there Prince of Wales would let 'is good lady 'ave them scarlet outriders afore 'er carridge, as looks like the Royal Family a-comin', for it give me quite a turn for to see a perlice on 'orseback a-ridin' before 'er carridge in the Park, as don't look the thing for a Princess, and didn't ought to be convoyed about like a perlice wan full of pris'ners.

I know if I were a Princess I'd have everythink up to the knocker, in top-boots and scarlet coats, and it's all thro' bein' careless over them things as everybody don't do their dooty as they did ought to, and I'm sure when I 'eard as that dear little boy 'ad been and fell out of winder over in Gerny, it give me quite a turn.

Not as it matters to 'im, dear child, as is out of a wicked world, and 'appy for ever and ever, as is 'ow I 'ope 'is poor dear mother looks at it, as the only comfort she can 'ave, poor soul; besides a-knowin' as every mother's 'art in Old England will feel for 'er tho' she is in a forrin land; tho' in course it aint so to 'er, as 'ave a good 'usban' over there, I hope, and every other blessin' for to comfort 'er poor broken 'art, as must indeed bleed with sorrer, poor dear!

So it's jest as well as that there Shar 'avo

sent them creeturs as would have got the cold shoulders 'ere pretty sharp; and I'm sure for my part if I'd see 'im a passin', I'd 'ave turned my 'ead away, cos I can't a-bear no wice, not in no form.

I says to Brown, as were a-settin' a-porin' over them Pershun books, as he's a-dippin' into constant, I says, "Wot's the difference atween a Shar and a Pa Shar?"

"Oh!" he says, "they aint got nothink to do with one another, cos one Pershur and the other Egyp."

"But," I says, "don't Pa Shar stands for Shar's father?"

He says, "Bless you, no. Why, wot ever made you think that?"

"Well," I says, "it sounds like it, and there can't be no great difference 'twixt Turks and Pershuns."

"Oh!" says Brown, "there is jest as much as 'twixt Catholics and Protestants."

"Oh!" I says, "indeed."

"Yes," says Brown, "the Turks says as they're right and the Pershuns wrong; and the Pershuns says jest the oppersite."

"Well, then," I says, "if the Pershuns gets the power they'll serve out the Turks jest like that Old Beastmark is a-doin' by the Catholics in Germany,

and the same as them Swiss 'umbugs, as was so full of their liberty when I were there, a-boastin' as they never made no difference, but now as they see as the Catholics is on the increase, they're afraid on 'em."

Leastways that's wot Mrs. O'Brien told me, and I says to 'er, "I've been among them Swiss myself, as is a set of money-grubbin' folks, as don't believe nothink at all theirselves, and interferes with them as does."

The same as a bull-'eaded fieldmale as lodged at Mrs. Padwick's, and got her bread by 'ritin' in them papers, and would 'rite anythink as they'd pay 'er for, she were a-goin' on agin the Pope and the Church that wiolent one Sunday evenin' arter tea, a-sayin' as all religion were 'umbug; so at last I says to 'er, "It's a pity, mum, as you don't give the Pope a chance."

She says, "Wot do you mean?"

"Why," I says, "if you was to send in your terms, perhaps he'd give you a job to 'rite on 'is side."

"Ah!" she says, "my pen is always on the side of wirtue, and agin bigotry and hignorance."

"Ah!" I says, "at 'ow much a line? Cos," I says, "I'm sure as you could 'rite wolumes over bigotry and hignorance too; but if you found as wirtue paid best, you'd give it a chance."

She says, "I can't dispute with a person as is so awful illiterit as you."

I says, "I knows I'm illiterit, as you calls it, as in course is a fine word for hignorant; but," I says, "with all your 'ritin' and readin', you're only a-guessin' like the rest; so pray who are you to set yourself up for to teach me, as is only for wot you can get by it? Cos," I says, "in my opinion, the wildest poor wretch as walks the street aint 'arf nor a quarter as bad as a woman at your time of life, as is too old and too ugly for anythink else, as gets 'er bread by a-'ritin' jest wot'll please the werry wust to read."

"Why," I says, "wotever is to become on us if all religion's done away? There'd be a pretty kettle of fish."

"Oh!" she says, "if you understood, you'd soon see as a pure filloserfy would be quite enuf without superstition."

I says, "And do you call yourself a pure filloserfy? Cos, if you are, all as I've got to say is, that I don't believe as there's twenty people in the world as would listen to you, and that not 'arf of them would understand you, and the other 'arf wouldn't try. And it's all werry fine for you to go on agin the Pope; but how do you know he ain't right? You can't prove it no more than anythink

else, cos you says as nothink aint true; so why should wot you thinks be?"

She says as argyments would be throwed away on me.

I says, "You're right, sich argyments as yours, so don't go and 'rite none for me, cos I shan't buy 'em, and that's all you writes for," and 'ome I goes, for I 'adn't no consumption when I 'eard about this Shar a-comin' as it would be so soon, so 'ad my work cut, and I says to Brown, "I must 'ave the winders cleaned, and the place look tidy."

"Why," he says, "he aint likely to come by here."

I says, "There's no tellin' who may come by anywhere, for I remember 'earin' my own father say as he once met King George a-ridin' in the back slums of the Boro' on 'orseback, as 'ad lost 'is way. So," I says, "don't be so sure as he mayn't come by, and I'm sure if he did I should be glad to see 'im, and don't think as Queen Wictoria could give 'im a better cup of tea, as always drinks it mixed, and werry partikler where I gets it now as there's so much rubbish about; and in course, poor feller, he feels at 'ome over 'is tea, as is the only thing as we've got in common like."

"Well," says Brown, "he's to be 'ere by the seventeenth, and he'll 'ave to eat and drink enuf to kill a dozen Shars," for he says the Lord Mare's

a-goin' to give a dinner to three thousand; and he'll 'ave at least five meals a day to get thro', as'll be at it pretty constant from morn till night."

"Well," I says, "Brown, all as I've got to say is, if they goes a-stuffin' and a-crammin' this poor Shar, he'll 'ave a fit or somethink; and it's my opinion, as the best thing as any one could do, would be to send 'im a box of antibilious pills, the same as my dear grandmother used to take, as was dandelion and gamboge, and a fine thing for the liver, cos, poor dear creetur, in course he don't know wot he's a-doin' a-eatin' of all them rich dishes, as 'ave been the end of many afore now, jest the same as a cow will bust itself in a clover-field, and 'ave knowed a pig myself as 'ad a fit thro' gettin' into a grain-tub, as is werry like a Shar a-dinin' with the Lord Mare, as, in course, will give 'im the werry best as money can buy, and no stint on it."

So, says Brown, "If he should be took ill, you'll be the person for to nuss 'im."

I says, "Go along with you; why, you don't think as I should like to go and nurse a 'Eathen Turk; and I'm sure you aint the one to let me, even if I would."

Brown says, "Bless your 'art, I'd trust you anywheres, or with anybody, bein' sure as you would do your dooty."

"Yes," I says, "but is it my dooty to do it?"

"Ah!" he says, "wait till you're sent for, old gal, and then we'll talk about it."

I didn't say no more, for I see as Brown were grumpy over somethink, so didn't like to ask no questions, till at last he says, "Martha, I do 'ope when this 'ere Shar comes, you won't go a-puttin yourself forard."

I says, "Brown," I says, "I knows my place, as should not think of goin' on in no way, not to attract no notice of a man as 'ave got as many wives as King Solomon. No," I says, "he may ask for me, but he won't 'ear me anser 'im in a 'urry."

"Oh!" says Brown, "if he don't see you till he asks for you, why, then it's all right."

I says, "Brown, I should like to send 'im a box of my grandmother's herb pills, and then my mind would be easy over 'is 'ealth; cos if he were to be took bad and die over 'ere, why, them Pershuns would make us pay up, jest like the Merrykins did over that there Allyblammer; cos, as we've been and give into that, we must expect as everyone will be askin' for compensation, jest the same as arter a railway axcident."

Says Brown, "You let well alone."

"Well," I says, "as long as he is well, I only thinks it's as well to keep 'im so."

Brown says, "Law, bless you, he'll bring 'is doctors and everything like that along with 'im."

"Well," I says, "I don't 'old with a medcin chest myself, as I remembers poor Mrs. Fremantle, over agin 'Ackney Marsh, as 'ad one, and dosed them children to death; and I do believe as 'arf 'er pleshure were a-weighin' of the things out, and never reared one on 'em, as I told 'er she never would; and killed 'er 'usban'; and never see fifty 'erself; and all thro' them cussed weights and scales."

I did not feel werry well for a day or two arter that, and as Brown were a-goin' away, I thought as I'd go and stop along with Mrs. Padwick, as 'ave got a bed-room wacant; and off I goes, the werry same day as Brown went to Brummagem.

Well, Mrs. Padwick she weren't over well 'erself, so she says, "Martha," she says, "wot shall we 'ave for supper?"

"Well," I says, "the lighter the better."

Says she, "Wot do you say to pettytoes?"

I says, "They're delicate eatin', only you did ought to be careful over the bones."

"Well," she says, "will you stew 'em your own way?"

"Yes," I says. And so I did, and delicious eatin'; and all as we 'ad with them, were a little Scotch ale, with a bit of cream-cheese and a

reddish, and was jest a-goin' to 'ave a little something 'ot, when in who should come, but Brown, as 'ad been telegraphed from Brummagem not to come, and 'adn't never give it a thought about me goin' out, so in course, 'ad been 'ome, and no supper nor nothink for 'im.

He weren't the least put out, for I will say as Brown is that reasonable as he don't never find a fault where there aint no fault to be found; and Mrs. Padwick she were glad to see 'im, and 'ad a nice bit of cold lamb in the 'ouse, as Brown preferred to pettytoes.

When he 'ad 'is supper, Brown says, "There aint no occasion for you to turn out, Martha, I'll find my way 'ome."

I says, "No, Brown, I'm a-comin' 'ome with you, as is my dooty."

So he says, "All right," and set there 'avin' of 'is pipe, and a-tellin' us 'ow this 'ere Shar were expected to go all round and see everythink all about England.

I says, "Then he will 'ave 'is work cut out, as will be took about like a wild beast in a carrywan."

"Ah!" says Brown, "it's wonderful to think wot we was when 'is country were one of the fust."

"Ah!" I says, "so I've 'eard say, and didn't be'ave well to the Jews neither, as was always bein' knocked about by somebody, not as they're easy put

down either, for I'm sure the way as they'll persevere, if you asks 'em the price of a flower-pot, and worret your life out for old clothes, and won't take no for a anser, tho' I will say as I've been a deal wuss cheated by them as called themselves Christ-shuns than by Jews, partikler one fieldmale, as tried to do me out of one of Brown's coats for a shillin', as a Ebrew Jew give me five for within a week."

"Ah!" says Brown, "it must be a wonderful country as is full of nightingals and otter of roses, and all manner like that."

"Well," I says, "then I'm werry thankful as I don't live there, for you may 'ave too many nightingals, and as to otter of rose, it's werry sickly in my cpinion."

"Ah!" says Brown, "think of miles and miles of rose trees, and lovely fruits and flowers."

"Well," I says, "it's all werry well, but the middle ile of Common Gardin is quite good enuf for me, and don't want nothink in the fruit and vegetable line I can't get there; as to flowers, there's my friend, Mrs. Buck, as 'ave a show as I'm sure no Pershur can't be finer, and I'll be bound don't put 'em up 'arf so well."

So Brown he only give a grunt, as showed me he were a-thinkin'.

Mrs. Padwick, she didn't want me to turn out thro' the night being chilly, but 'er double

bed were engaged, so in course I said, "Go I must."

It arn't but a step or two from one door to the other, so we was 'ome in a jiffey, but both Brown and me felt the night air cool, and so he made a little somethin' 'ot, cos we've got a kittle over the gas, and he smoked 'arf a pipe afore goin' to bed.

I don't think as ever I were more tired in m life, and wasn't 'ardly in bed afore I were fast asleep, tho' Brown said as I were that wakeful when I come to talk it over with 'im the next day; for I says to 'im, "Wotever are you a-gettin' up that early for, as it isn't daylight 'ardly, tho' you can't say as there's much night in June."

"Why," he says, "the Shar's to be 'ere this blessed day, and I've got to go and see 'im."

I says, "I told you so; as comes of your a-readin' so much about 'im, as 'ave got to Queen Wictoria's ears, as 'ave sent for you."

"Ah!" he says, "and you'll 'ave to come to."

I says, "Never, as shall 'ave them three 'ussies a-tearin' of my eyes out, as is tigers for jealousy and revenge."

He says, "Why, I means to get you in for to see 'im land, as will be Woolwich Dockyard."

"Why," I says, "I thought as that were done away with, and 'avo 'eard say, as all the labourers

was sent over to Canada, at so much a 'ead, as were paid out of the army hestimates, and that's why they always 'ave Gladstin for Member at Greenwich, cos he's sich a friend to the workin' man.

"Oh! no," he says, "it's all there fast enuf, and that's where he's to land."

"Why," I says, "Brown, you must be light-headed, this 'ere is only the fust of June, and he can't be 'ere for a fortnight."

Says Brown, "I'm blessed if you aint right, Martha, why, I must 'ave been a-dreamin'."

I says, "And enuf to make any one dream, the way you 'ave been a-readin' Pershun from mornin' till night, as 'ave got a deal on it into my own 'ead about their ways, as stews a lamb 'ole with saffron, and drinks snow water and peaches, and all manner like that, as you will keep a-thinkin' over, partikler arter a supper."

So Brown gets into bed agin, and says, "I'm precious sleepy," and were off agin like a shot, as the sayin' is; and I weren't long in follerin' 'im; for tho' not one to go in for no second sleeps, it weren't no use a-gettin' up at 'arf-past three, with no 'eavy wash on, and not espectin' the sweeps, nor nothink.

When we did get up, Brown he couldn't get over 'is dream, as he said were the Shar a-standin' as plain as the nose on my face afore 'im.

"Why," I says, "you said as you was a-goin' to meet 'im, and I were to come too."

"Yes," says Brown, "that's wot I did dream; but," he says, "let's get some breakfast, for dreamin' makes one 'ungry;" as we did accordin'; and when it were over Brown he went off for to spend the day with a friend near Chiselhurst, leavin' of it uncertain about 'im a-returnin' till late at night; and jest on eleven in comes Miss Pilkinton, all dressed out like a old fool, with 'er nose floured and 'er eyebrows done out black with a smoked pin's 'ead—leastways that's the way as a old lady in the name of Purgrave did used to do 'ern, as my mother washed for when I were a gal in the Fulham Road, as is all shops now; and the rouge on 'er 'ankerchers did use to colour the water; as set up in bed when a-dyin', and were painted to the last, as is a-goin' out of the world under false pretences, I considers, cos she couldn't bear to be told as she were a-dyin', and would put the best face on it.

Well, Miss Pilkinton she'd come to spend the day, tho' I'm sure I 'adn't asked 'er, for there'd been a coolness atween us, and not much to give 'er, as 'ad only got a bit of cold pie and a gooseberry puddin' in the 'ouse, thro' a-goin' to 'ave somethink 'ot for supper as Brown were to bring.

So I says to 'er, "If you likes to put up with wot you can get, pray stop in welcome."

So she said as she would, and 'ad brought me a kittle-'older as she'd worked for me, and were in a reglar amiable humour, a-offerin' to clean up my black silk mantle for me, as she certingly did make look wonderful fresh, tho' it turned red in places, as were, I think, owin' to the iron bein' too 'ot as she pressed it with; not as it didn't cost me nothink, for she used 'arf a bottle of sperrits, and made the place smell that strong of old Tom down to the street door, as made the man as called for the water-rate say, "Well, any'ow, you won't ruin the Company by drinkin' of the water neat."

Miss Pilkinton, she were that full of that Shar and all other Pershun ways, a-talkin' about bull-bulls and hatter-gulls, and spice groves, and nightingales, with almond-eyed moon faces, and a-goin' on a-singin' constant, "Oh, fly to the desert!"

"But," she says, "I can't make out 'owever he's to get on, for he don't speak nothink but Pershun, and they'll be obliged to keep up a constant pantermine all the time."

"Well," I says, "a pantermine's werry well to amuse 'im like for a little while, as is no doubt like a child in 'is ways; but I'm sure he'll get sick of that Clown with 'is fooleries, if he 'as too much on 'im, tho' no doubt he'll like the Columbine."

"Oh," she says, "I don't mean that sort of

pantermine, but constant signs and motions when they wants to ask 'im a question."

"Law!" I says, "that's the same thing; but whoever is to do it, partikler at this time of year? cos if it were Christmas it would be werry easy to get them Clown and Panterloons as understans it when the pantermine is all about; but now, I don't suppose as you'd meet a couple of Clowns in a day's walk, tho' I did see two myself the fust week in May, when the sweeps was about, but they wasn't not reglar Clowns, sich as you could 'ave about the Shar."

Miss Pilkinton made 'erself werry agreeable all the arternoon, cos I wouldn't let her keep on workin' when dinner were over, and she 'ad a book in 'er pocket as were all about love-tales with them Pershuns; 'ow young gents set up all night a-playin' on the gittar, as I says to 'er must be a deal more disturbin' than the nightingales, as sings all night down where Liza lives, as broke my rest; and if 'er 'usban's uncle, as 'ave the cottage next door, as is that fat as he can't see 'is feet, nor yet tie his shoes, nor yet shave 'imself, and is a reglar 'og to eat everythink as is on the table, didn't take and get a boy to shoot 'em.

Not but wot I must say it is werry aggrawatin' to be kep' awake all night even by music, for I'm sure the last time as I slep', leastways 'ad a bed, at

Mrs. Padwick's, parties next door 'ad a party in the mews, and kep' on with a fiddle a-scrapin' till daylight did appear, as the sayin' is.

Not as that were any excuse for that old brute, old Sinful, when he tried for to pison my blackbird cos it woke 'im up in the mornin', as never thought of beginnin' to sing till his cocks begun a-crowin', as we all knows is their duty for to do in the morn, as is the way as people in old times afore clocks was inwented knowed it were time to get up.

But I had the best of 'im, for I see 'im a puttin' of 'is old fingers over the wall a-tryin' to drop a somethink into the bird's cage, as were 'angin' jest over the dust-'ole by the back-door, as he couldn't quite reach.

Well, the plumber were at work in the back airey, and 'ad put 'is' little fire with a ladle of, melted lead and them red 'ot irons in it wot they uses for soderin' on the steps as I were standin' at the bottom on, a-watchin' the work, and see old Sinful's fingers a-fiddlin' over the wall with a bit of paste in 'em, so jest as he got 'em near the cage I lays 'old of one of them 'ot irons and pops it sudden on 'is fingers; he give a yell like mad. So I puts back the iron and runs up the steps, a-sayin', "Oh, dear! wot is the matter?" but never looked 'is way; and it's as well as I didn't, for if that old viper didn't ketch up a tin bowl of water and throw it all over

he wall, a-thinkin' to ketch me, as it didn't; but some on it fell into that sarcer of melted lead as went off like a gun and blowed up the fire, and might 'ave scalded me to death; and it's a mussy as it missed the man's eyes as were at work over a pipe, and were a sulky sort of a party. And says to me, "Look 'ere, if you and that 'old party next door is up to any more of your larks I shan't work any more, as did ought to be ashamed of yourself at your time of life to be a-larkin' like a couple of schoolboys."

In course I were not a-goin' to argufy with a workman, so I only says, "My good man, go on with your work, and don't make no remarks on your betters."

If the feller didn't bust a-larfin', a-sayin' "Betters, indeed!" as I walked away.

As is wot comes of these 'ere trades' unions a-meetin' all over the place, not as I'm one to stop any one's mouth; but yet don't like parties as don't know their place.

But, as I were a-sayin', Miss Pilkinton she kep' on a-readin' about all them Pershuns as, she said, was like fairy tales in the "'Rabian Nights."

"Ah?" I says, "but all their n'ights is days there, wot with the sun never settin' and constant full moons."

"Oh!" says she, "the sun do set over there, and the moon can't always be at the full."

I says, "Oh; can't it? Well," I says, "that aint my fault, I can't 'elp it; but I knows as there is some parts where the sun never sets, as is why I told that drunken toad, Mrs. Lines, as she were a-makin' a fool of 'erself in a-sneerin' at the Bible a-sayin' as it couldn't never 'ave stood still."

So I says to 'er, "If it never sets, it never can't rise, and if that aint a-standin' still I don't know wot is; besides," as I said, "Moses wern't no fool, and knowed wot he were a-talkin' about, and I'm sure if he didn't know the sun's ways of goin' on Mrs. Lines can't, tho' 'er father were 'ead-clerk in a fire-office; but that don't prove nothink, cos I knowed myself Matilda Ellis, as 'er father were 'ead turncock to the Westminster Waterworks; and yet 'adn't never 'eard of the spring tides, as proves as the cobbler's wife don't always go the best shod, as the sayin' is.

We'd a early cup of tea, me and Miss Pilkinton, for she were a-goin' 'ome early, and jest on seven, as we was a-gettin' ready, for I were a-goin' to see 'er to the bus, as would take 'er straight to the tramway as runs over the foot of Westminster Bridge to Greenwich, so would put 'er out at New Cross, when in who should come but Brown, with a basket from the country, as were a couple of fowls

and some new-laid eggs, and 'arf a young pig, as were like milk for whiteness.

I says, "Law, Brown, pork sich weather as this! the werry sight of it gives me a turn; for," I says, "tho' I can salt the 'and and the leg, wot-ever can I do with the line?"

"Why," he says, "it don't weigh over ten pounds the lot, so if you puts them two parts in salt, we can cut up the line for chops for supper; for I've 'ad no dinner and am precious sharp set."

"Well," I says, "if Mrs. Padwick would come round and Miss Pilkinton will stop, certingly we could polish it off, for the gal didn't 'ave overmuch dinner, as was goin' to 'ave beef sausages for 'er supper."

So Brown he went round to fetch Mrs. Padwick, for the pork 'ad come from 'er own niece, so in course she'd fancy it thro' bein' part of the family; and I persuaded Miss Pilkinton to stop thro' 'avin' the spare bed all ready; and a werry nice little supper we 'ad, with the bones of that pork a-meltin' in your mouth, as were as fresh as a daisy and quite as sweet.

I don't think as ever I did enjoy anythink more, with bottled ale and a bit of cheese, and arter that Brown he made some gin punch, as we drunk cold, and he set a-smokin' 'is pipe, and told us all

about 'ow ar the Shar had got, and wot 'is picter were like, as he'd been and bought a fottygraft on; as don't look that inhuman as I expected to see 'im, but 'ave knowed a Inglishman the himage on 'im, as did used to be showed at the Gypshun 'All, so preaps were 'arf a Gypshun all the time, as is much the same as a Turk, as is werry like a Jew.

It were jest on twelve o'clock when we got to bed, and glad I was for to get there, tho' a-feelin' that dead tired, and a-knowin' as I must be up in good time in the mornin', as I expected the sweeps, and were a-goin' to 'ave a good clean down, and were a-goin' to have my white bed put up, and the 'ouse in that order as if the Shar were to come I should not be ashamed to show 'im the rooms, tho' I'm thankful as I don't let no more lodgin's.

Brown 'ad told us a deal fresh over the Shar, and 'ow as he'd been at Berling in a carridge along with that old Hemperor, as they could not make out wot they was a-sayin' to one another, tho' that don't much matter when you means to be civil to a forriner, as 'ave often sent away a organ boy myself afore now with a nod and a penny.

But I'm sure the way as everyone is a-goin' to show this 'ere Shar attentions is downright wonderful, partikler Queen Wictoria a-goin' to sea

with 'im, as is wot she 'ates, and in course wouldn't be ettyket for 'er to 'ave to call for a basin, as might be unwell 'isself, as is no doubt bilious like them other forriners, and it wouldn't be no treat to be took out to sea in a open boat without a strong stomick, the same as that time as the young Portlocks took me out a-fishin' for whitin' off Margate, as meant for to be civil and give me a treat, and a nice treat it were; but I took the will for the deed, as it's wot the Shar will do, no doubt a-knowin' when they means well, tho' preaps a odd way of showin' it, to take 'im out and make 'im ill.

But the wust will be if he should feel it a-comin' on and not be able to ask 'em to put back; and certingly if any one were to stop along with me as I couldn't speak a word to all day, the time would 'ang 'eavy on the 'ands, as the sayin' is; but the werry last thing would be to propose water in any shape, as ain't a thing as you wants langwidge to make 'em understand, and as to goin' on the water, it's all werry fine as far as a penny steamer goes, but not wot I should think of offerin' myself as a compliment to anyone as is Queen Wictoria's intentions to 'im.

But as to talkin' I'm sure when I were over in Paris the first time langwidge didn't go far, for all as I could say were "Wee," and yet the things as I

got thro' that little word nobody wouldn't credit; and I do believe I got on better that time than I did afterwards, when I could ask for wot I wanted, leastways, I did ask, but never got the thing as I meant, as is all thro' French bein' that foolish langwidge as calls things maskelin and feminin when they aint got no life in 'em, so in course can't be of no partikler sect; as is enuf to make a cat larf—the ideer of a table bein' a lady, and a knife a he creetur; but, law, them French is that conceited as I do 'ope this 'ere new President will take some on it out on 'em, as is the one to do it thro' bein' Irish, as won't stand no nonsense.

I wasn't no sooner in bed than my eyes was shet, and as to Brown, he were a-snorin' afore I put the light out.

I didn't seem to 'ave been gone off 'ardly when Brown says, "Don't oversleep yourself, Martha, for," he says, "he'll pass the door in less than 'arf-a-our."

"Wot," I says, "and not to land at Woolwich for a week? Why, it's impossible."

He says, "Don't you know as time is different with 'im to wot it is with us?"

I says, "I knows as the sun 'ave been knowed to stand still over there; and, in course, if it don't never set, 'ow can they tell 'ow the time is a-goin'?"

"But," I says, "tell me, is he a-comin' on a helefant? Cos," I says, "I don't believe as that wooden pavement, as they've been and laid down agin the new church in the Strand, as my dear mother did used to call it, will bear 'im; and, if he was to go thro' into the common shore, there would be a pretty mess with all them dimons on 'im, as would be a nice 'aul for the mudlarks."

Says Brown, a-glarin' at me, "Dorter of a burnt father! 'ow dare you mention such a thing?"

I says, "Don't be a fool, Brown, a-talkin' like that out of Miss Pilkinton's book. You're enuf to frighten anyone to death."

"Then," he says, "why refuse to do the civil, and show 'im about?"

I says, "Show who about?"

"Why," he says, "the Shar, as 'ave asked for you the moment as he landed."

I says, "Asked for me? Why, wotever do you mean?"

"Why," he says, "you're well known over there, as is the same as Miss Pilkinton called 'The Peri of the Pyramids.' So," he says, "come along."

I 'adn't the strength to scream, nor yet say nay, for he'd got on a perliceman's uniform, and glared frightful.

I says, "I'll go, but don't use no violence; and

do jest tell me, that's a dear, 'ow long you've been in the force?"

He says, "Queen Wictoria would 'ave me swore in the moment she 'eard as the Trades Union was a-goin' to meet in the Park, and she's ordered you to be sent to Win'sor Castle in case I don't be'ave well; and, if I goes over to the other side, she'll 'ave you thrown over the Tems Embankment."

I says, "Then I'm a lost woman, for one single mouthful of Tems water would be my death."

I 'adn't 'ardly spoke them words than there I was, a-settin' along with Queen Wictoria and that there Shar, as I knowed in a minnit from 'is fotty-graft; and as to Queen Wictoria, it were jest as if she were my own sister, as smiled that gracious, a-sayin' in a whisper to me, "'Ere's a pretty noo-sance for us both, Mrs. Brown, aint it?" And there she were a-settin' in 'er garding, and all them Ministers round 'er, as 'ad all got their best liveries on, and a-tryin' to smile, tho' I see as somethink were goin' wrong; and one chap, as looked the gardener, says, "I won't 'ave it; and if you was to skip yourself in the Park, I'd order you out."

I says, "Hity, 'Tity! Who are you, my good man, as dares to talk like that to your sufferin' lady?"

Says Gladstone to me, in a whisper, "It's only Ayrton, and she don't mind 'im, cos he's Scotch."

I says, "He's a reglar label on the Scotch, then, for I'm sure they're that perlite to ladies; and I'm sure if I'd wanted to 'ave skipped all over the 'Ighlands, I should 'ave been as welcome as a lamb on a 'igh 'ill, and they'd 'ave been proud to 'ave see me, even if I'd 'ave fancied a kilt to do it in."

A man in a kilt, as were a-standin' near Queen Wictoria, give a grin. Then that Ayrton says, "I tell you what it is, Lowe, if I ketches you a-tryin' to come thro' the Park gates agin on your bicycle, I'll put you in the pound."

"Oh!" I says, "are you Mr. Lowe? Then, talkin' of pounds, 'owever come Queen Wictoria to let you take the dooty off sugar, as were cheap enuf before, and now won't be no cheaper? And," I says, a-turnin' to Queen Wictoria, "you really, Grashus Majesty, let 'em 'ave it too much their own way, as is only a-thinkin' of sweetenin' up them small shopkeepers, so as they'll wote for 'em."

"Hush!" says Queen Wictoria. "We're only a-tryin' to sweeten this 'ere Shar, as grows sugar over there."

I says, "I'm sorry to 'ear as he wants sweetenin', but wotever do you care for 'im?"

"Oh!" she says, "we must keep 'im sweet; cos, don't you see, Roosher is a-tryin' for to creep n to Indier, and if we're friends with the Shar, e won't let 'em come thro' 'is premises."

I says, "'Ow sing'ler as you should say that! Why, they was Brown's identical words over supper, as I'm sorry as you weren't in time for; and that bit of pork were a real treat, as even that Shar would 'ave relished."

"Oh!" she says with a sigh, "I wish he'd go anywhere and leave me in peace, as 'ave been dragged away from my 'Ighland 'ome for to meet 'im, and now shall 'ave to go to sea with 'im."

"Well," I says, "take lemon juice and a bit of camphor to smell, and no insects won't touch you."

Jest then I 'eard that Shar give a snore, so I I says, "It aint manners to snore under anyone's nose like that; but," I say, "I dare say you don't care 'ow much he sleeps, cos then he's like the children out of mischief; but," I says, "'ow long will he stay?"

"Oh!" she says, "I don't know, but the young people may 'ave the trouble on 'im, for I won't; and as to goin' about with 'im sight-seein', I aint got the strength for it."

I says, "In course not, partikler goin' up St. Paul's and the Monymment, and as to the Christshul Pallis it gives me the 'eadache to think on it, and if he do go to this Alexandra Pallis, as he may like to see, cos in course it will remind 'im of Egypt, let 'im be sure as he goes the day it's open, for I've

been turned back myself at the werry gates; a turned out a wet arternoon."

"Oh!" says Queen Wictoria, "I do think as he's a-wakin' up, and I must be all smiles."

"No," I says, "Your Grashus, he's only give a turn, as is aperiently a 'eavy sleeper, tho' restless."

"Ah!" she says, "I'll lay a penny he'll soon be wide awake enuf, and it's one comfort he don't understand a word I'm sayin' even when awake, so can give went to my feelin's."

"Ah!" I says, "Your Majesty, and a great comfort too, as I knows well thro' 'avin' a next door naybour a good deal with me, as were as dear as a post, but that artful as she could tell by your lips movin' wot you was a-thinkin' about; but 'ear she couldn't, for when some boys put a cracker in 'er pocket one fifth of November, as went off with that bang as tore it off from the tape it were sewed to, she never 'eard, tho' she felt the warmth thro' everythink, and I do wish as Your Grashus Majesty would order that Guy Fox to be put down, cos tho' he were one of the Royal Family, yet it's been kep' up long enuf, and now so many years ago, that I do think he might be give up like King Charles the First escapin' in the oak apple-tree."

She didn't make no answer, but give me a wink as I knowed meant somethink; so I looks up, and if there wasn't that there Shar wide awake, a-elpin'

'isself to the sperrits on the sly, as is agin 'is religion; thro' all them Turks bein' teatotalers, like a good many other unbelievers.

I only give a corf like, for to give 'im a 'int as he were observed, a-thinkin' as he might plead the cramp, as were old Mrs. Tozer's game, as took the pledge, and broke it about every other Sunday.

"So then," says Queen Wictoria, "don't take no notice on 'im, cos preaps it'll make 'im sleep the sounder, and not snore so awful loud, as you can 'ear 'im all over the Pallis, and it's a mussy as I aint got no young children now, or they'd be a-screamin' with fright all night, and if the young Waleses was 'ere I couldn't 'ave 'im, and a nice bill there'll be for sperrits, let alone 'avin' the gardin done up, and the paint cleaned, and every chimbley swep'."

I says, "Yes, Your Majesty, and so 'ave I; as is a 'ard day's work at my little place, but wot it must be in a pallis I can't think, tho' in course you've got plenty of 'elp with all them ministers a idlin' about, and any time you wanted a extra 'and there's Mrs. Challin as I can recommend to trust 'er with untold gold; but," I says, "you must keep your Royal eye on your Royal cellarette, the same as you must on parties as shall be nameless, as is a-snorin' agin now ike a pig-stye broke loose;"

a-meanin' that Shar as was up in a corner all of a 'eap.

Says the Queen, "Wotever to do with 'im I can't think, as 'ave all the sojers out to please 'im in Winsor Park, and showed 'im the Lord Mare, and really I can't a-bear 'im in the carridge with me, for wot with hotter of roses, musk and garlic as he's a-chewin' constant, he's too much of a good thing even in the hopen hair."

"Well," I says, "Your Majesty, I could take 'im about one or two places."

She says, "You're a good soul, and one as I can trust."

Jest then that Shar give sich a snort as made me jump agin, and reglar frightened Queen Wictoria out of the room, and that Shar he turns on me, and says, "Well, Mrs. Brown, and where are we a-goin' together?"

I says, "Escuse me, Shar, but do you consider that 'onerable in you for to pretend not to understand nothink afore Queen Wictoria's face, and then up and speak like this the werry moment her back is turned?"

"Ah!" he says, "you're not up to no court ways."

I says, "Certingly not, thro' never 'avin' lived in one, not but wot there's as 'ealthy courts about London as there's lanes in the country, and not so much feyer nor small-pox neither."

Says he, "Where are we?"

"Why," I says, "as far the eye can reach, it must be the top of St. Paul's."

He says, "The top of St. Paul's, wot?"

"Ah!" says I "my boy, you've been at the sperrits agin," but didn't like to say as it were a church, cos we all knows Turks can't abear the name of Christshuns; and as to lettin' any of us go into one of their churches, they'd sooner die fust.

So I says, "It's a fine view, aint it."

He busts out a-larfin'.

So I says, "I knows what you're a larfin' at, it's the smoke as you can't see nothink for, and in course aint as clear as Persher, where the sun never sets."

He says, a-bustin' out singin', "Oh! fly to the desert!"

I says, "Lawk a mussy, Mr. Shar, why, wot would Mr. Brown say," and then I looks, and if we wasn't both a-sittin' under a palm-tree, jest the same as I've see in Egyp, and if he wasn't a-eatin' the bit of cold pork as we'd left at supper, in 'is fingers, for I'd 'ad the bit of line roasted, thro' not a-likin' pork chops, as is so dry when young and tender.

I didn't like to tell 'im as it were pork, as might put 'im out, so jest to change the subject I says,

"You must miss your good ladies a-deal, I should think."

He didn't make no anser, but his eyes glared at me that size, as he said "There's the sack a-waitin' for you."

I jumps up with a scream, and he says, a-layin' 'is 'and on me, "Keep quiet, do, I wants to get to sleep."

So I didn't 'ardly dare draw my breath, when who should I see but Queen Victoria, a-walkin' along the road.

So I 'urries up to 'er and says, "Oh! please Your Majesty, do 'ave a turn with this 'ere Shar, as is a reglar bear."

She were all smiles, a-sayin' "Oh! he's a-comin' in to tea this werry afternoon, as I 'opes the rain will keep off, for the last time as I 'ad a garding party, I got my best crown wet thro' a-sittin' near a 'ole in the tent."

I says, "It's my opinion as Your Majesty 'ave got a reglar careless lot about you, and I do 'ope as you won't get roomatties."

"Oh! dear no," she says, "but," she says, "I am dreadful put out with that Mr. Lowe, as 'ave been a-ridin' over parties with his bicycle."

I says, "Yes, and blind as he is, it's a mussy he didn't go over the bridge, as well as the fishmonger, poor soul, as couldn't have been in his right mind,

for to take it to 'art like that, as I were a-sayin' to Brown."

Says the Queen, "Oh! do you know Brown?"

"Well," I says, "in course, your Majesty."

"Ah, then," she says, "one of the best and faithfulest of servants."

"Well," I says, "it don't become me for to praise my own 'usban'."

"Keep still," says the Shar, in a voice of thunder in my ear.

I says, "I 'umbly asks your pardin', Mr. Shar, 'but were only speakin' a word about my own lawful 'usban', to my own lawful Queen, cos," I says, "tho' you are a wisitor, we aint a-goin' to neglect 'er, bless 'er royal 'art; but," I says, "I wish this tea as she were a-speakin' about were ready, for I'm that dry."

"It's the pork," says the Shar, as I see a-standin' at my washin'-stand, a-drinkin' out of the water-jug.

I says, "It's sweet and 'olesome, being the New River, but," I says, "I don't consider as you've any right in my room, and if my 'usban' weren't 'ere beside me, I'd 'oller thieves."

He only said "Pork," and were gone.

"Well," I says, "if it went agin 'is consence he didn't ought to 'ave eat it; did he now?"

"No," says a voice, as I knowed were the Claimint, as stood close at my elber, and says,

"Oh! Mrs. Brown, 'owever could you take and swear as I am Ortin?"

I says, "Me swear your Ortin, my good man; why, I weren't never asked to."

"No," he says, "but you told the Shar, and now it's got all over Persher, and I shan't never get my rights over there, as is where my mother come from; and that's 'ow it is I forgot the langwidge, cos I wasn't never treated proper from the month." He says, "You must 'ave knowed about the brown mark on my side, the many times as you've been and washed me."

I says, "Me wash you," I says, "never! as aint one to forget the hinfants as I've 'ad a 'and in; but," I says, "why don't you take and say your kattykism off at once, and say who was your god-fathers and godmothers, and then, in course, nobody couldn't prove as you aint the same hinfant."

"Ah!" he says, a wimperin', "it's all werry easy to swear a feller's life away when he's down, and I aint got no money for to give parties to come over all the way, and must 'ave their expenses. I swear as I aint Ortin; and I can't say my kattykism, cos I weren't never taught it proper."

"Well," I says, "don't bother me, and I'm sure the Shar may bless 'is stars as he don't know no English, cos he can't be pestered about you."

"Why," he says, "he wants to make out as he's

Tichbung 'isself, and that's wot 'ave brought 'im over for to claim the estates."

"Well," I says, "if it takes as long to find out who he really is, as it 'ave to prove who you aint; wly, he'll spend years 'ere, and all 'is five millions over witnesses."

"Well," I says, "you 'adn't better go on a-talkin' for Queen Wictoria's close at 'and, as won't like to 'ear your name, I'm sure, if she's 'arf as sick it as everyone else."

"Oh!" he says, "if I were only the Prince of Wales."

I says, "I tell you wot it is, my pippin, don't you come that game, cos it's treason, and you'll end your days on a scaffoldin'."

"Ah!" he says, "it's werry 'ard to lose your rights, cos you couldn't never learn nothink at school, and 'ave forgot all as you ever did learn, thro' 'avin' of a bad mem'ry, as aint no sin, but a bloomin' shame."

"Why the devil don't you keep your arms down?" says the Shar.

"Well," I says, "one thing's werry clear, Shar or no Shar, you ain't took long to learn the vulgar tung, any'ow; but," I says, "don't you use sich espreshuns afore Queen Wictoria, or she'll pretty soon show you the door, and you may think yourself lucky as you aint committed for contempt of court,

or sent to prison like them labourer's wives, for kickin' up a row, as were quite nat'ral, with their 'usban's took to prison."

So I says to the Shar, as kep' a-starin' at me, "If you wants to see the British Museum, we must find out the days as it's open; the same as the National Gallery, and it's a pity as you didn't go fust to Madame Tussor's, so as they might get a good likeness on you, not but wot your fottygraft will do; and as to the Jewlogical Gardins, you'll feel that at 'ome there, along with them other lions, as you won't never want to come away agin; and I'm sure they'd keep you there with pleasure; and as to Madame Tussor's, you'd think you was inside of them Pirrymids, where they did used to keep them 'Gypsum kings done up; and I'm sure if I am to be kep' alive arter my death, I'd rather be done in wax, than made a mummy on any other way; but," I says, "we did ought to be startin', cos there's the Tower of London to be took in the way, as is a werry affectin' sight, to think of parties as 'ave been shet up all their lives there, and a many 'ad their 'eads cut off for not obeyin' that old cat, Queen Lizzybeth, as were a old she-devil, and not a bit like Queen Victoria, as won't let you into some parts, as is too shockin'."

Not as that's true, but I thought I'd say so, cos then we could choke 'im off from seein' of the crown

jewels, as he'd turn up 'is nose at, tho' preaps it might be a 'int, and he might make us a present of some of 'is as he've left off as would look werry well turned and done up fresh.

He didn't seem to take no notice of what I were a-sayin', so jest to change the subjec I says to 'im, "You'd like to go on the water, and it's a pity as they've been and blocked up the Tems Tunnel, cos you'd like to 'ave seen it; not but wot the one as they've been a-makin' under the sea to France aint a finer sight."

He only give a grunt.

So I says, "Did you suffer in crossin'?"

He says, "You'll be over the side in a minnit, as sure as a gun."

I says, "Where am I?"

"Why," he says, "in bed."

I says, "Never, for I've got my bonnet on; but," I says, "'ow it's a-rainin'."

"Yes," he says, "and there's been thunder and lightnin'."

"Oh!" I says, "Queen Wictoria ordered that as is a salute in 'oner of you, as was to be kep' up constant from the moment as you 'ove in sight off Margit till you landed at Woolwich, as is the way with all the Royal Families as comes from abroad; but," I says, "if I don't get a cup of tea I shall die of thirst."

"Take a drink of this," he says, a-offerin' of me a mug.

I says, "Get away, do, a-darin' to speak to a lady with your nightcap on."

He busts out a-larfin'.

I says, "You impident 'eathen," and jumps up; and if it wasn't Brown a-standin' by my bedside 'oldin' a mug of water in 'is 'and.

I says, "My goodness, Brown, wherever are we in this world?"

"Why," he says, "in our own bed."

I says, "I'm thankful to 'ear it, for," I says, "I've been sufferin' agony all night over that Shar."

"No," he says, "it's all thro' suppin' of pork, you've been a-talkin' in your sleep and a-tossin' about like mad."

I took a good swig at my tooth-mug, and then I says, "Brown, do you mean to say as Queen Wictoria aint been a-talkin' to me with 'er own royal lips, a-smilin' constant, as 'ave got a voice like a silver bell, parties says?"

He says, "Don't be a fool, a-keepin' of it up now as you are awake."

"Well," I says, "asleep or awake I've 'ad enuf of that Shar, and I'm sure if I was to see 'im fifty times over I never shouldn't know 'im better than I do now, for I could swear to 'im anywheres."

"Now," he says, "do go to sleep, that's a good soul."

"Well," I says, "I'll try, for I should like to 'ave another dream about Queen Wictoria, as they may well call 'er Your Grashus Majesty, for that's wot she is all over even in a dream, so must be a-deal more so in reality." But Brown, he were a-snorin', as lulled me off and I didn't dream no more but got a good night's rest afore the sweeps come; but you don't ketch me a-eatin' 'ot roast pork agin at night, not as it disagreed beyond them wishuns; and as to Mrs. Padwick and Miss Pilkinton they never felt it a-bit, no more than chickens; but Miss Pilkinton she said as she'd been a-dreamin' of nothink but Pershur, and as to Mrs. Padwick, she'd never dreamt at all.

"Well," I says, "if dreams comes true I shall be a-settin' 'ob and nob with my Sovrin lady some day, and I dare say I could give 'er a good many 'ints as she'd find come in 'andy for 'er grandchildren, tho', in course, she've 'ad a good deal of esperience 'erself; but I'm sure as she wants someone to check that there Ayrton's impidence, and as to Gladstin, if he aint a artful card I never see one; but I don't believe as they'll find out wot brought that Shar, as is one of them as can keep 'is own council, as the sayin' is; and preaps arter all is only a-pretendin' not to speak no langwidge so

as they mayn't find out 'is little game, cos it's the same with 'im as with the monkeys, as the niggers say wont talk for fear as they should be made to work. And, for my part, I don't like them silent parties as is werry often nothink else but only a cloak, for we all knows as still waters runs deep, as the sayin' is, and them as says the least thinks the most, as may be the way with the Shar of Pershur ; but any'ow I can't make 'im out, asleep nor awake.

I couldn't get that Shar out of my 'ead, not for the next two days ; and I says to Brown, " I do 'ope as they'll treat 'im proper, cos in course Queen Wictoria can't be everywheres, and I ain't got no confidence in them Ministers, as in course won't let the Prince of Wales do like George the Fourth when the Sovrins was over 'ere, as were dressed up in a uniform that tight as he couldn't 'ardly draw 'is breath, and wonder as they got a 'orse to bear 'im, thro' bein' that lusty, tho' he did wear stays, and always 'ad a pair of steps to mount with, but were werry touchy over 'is figger, and couldn't bear bein' fifty, and 'ad a man put in prisin for sayin' so.

Not as preaps he'd 'ave minded 'is own people a-knowin' of 'is age, but didn't like it mentioned afore all them forriners, as come 'ere when they'd been and conkered Bonyparte, as my own mother see 'em at Woxall Gardins, cos poor old King George he couldn't see 'em thro' bein' out of 'is

mind in Winsor Castle, as is werry much improved since them days, as were obligated to 'ave a padded room thro' bein' that blind as were a melancholy sight, the same as the death of the Princess Charlotte, as were alive and well then, tho' they do say not treated well by 'er father's royal family, as is the wust of parents a-fallin' out, as there's a many as aint agreed as 'ave kep' together for the sake of the children, the same as Mrs. Grainger, as 'ad a deal to put up with from 'im, as were a willin, and 'it 'er about, and would 'ave tore out 'er 'air by the roots, only, as luck would 'ave it, she'd took to fronts arter 'er fifth; as is a great trial to 'ave a man come 'ome and shy a couple of ducks out of winder cos there's a cinder in the dish; but, law! some men is reglar Bluebeards over their meals, as is werry well when you've got a dozen wives to bully, but I considers cowardly, with only one poor little woman as aint got the sperrit to say bo to a goose, as the sayin' is.

"But, law bless you!" as I says to Miss Pilkinton, "there won't be nothink like that for this 'ere Shar, as is only a Pershun arter all; but them Sovrins was Europe, Asier, Africker, and Merryker all rolled into one. But," I says, "I daresay they'll do enuf to keep 'im quiet, jest the same as they've been and made that there Duffy a knight, as is the best way for to keep them rebels under, and I daresay as it'll

end in Queen Wictoria a-makin' President Grant a Knight of the Garter, tho' in course the Merrykin ladies wouldn't never mention it without blushin'; but if she was to let 'im 'old levees over there for 'er, like she do the Prince of Wales 'ere, they'd be that pleased, cos they're fond of them things, and likes a bit of show; but the wust on it is, if she knighted one, she must knight 'em all; and if one were made a lord, they'd all want to be; so preaps it's best to let 'em go on as they are, poor things, and fancy theirselves somebodies, when all the while they're nothink but nobodies, as is wot they means by a Republic; not as that'll be long in France; and they do say as them Bonypartes 'as got 'opes, but I'm sure they must be big fools to trust theirselves in the Tooleries, cos next time that poor Eugene won't get off so easy, as owes 'er a grudge for givin' 'em the slip last time, and may not fall in with a market cart, next time, nor yet with an English yott, nor 'ave time to burn all the papers afore she starts, tho' no doubt she'll be able to get some of 'er things back as she've sold, and I 'ope will take more care of 'er money, if ever she gets a chance at the French till agin.

But, as I were a-sayin', them allied sovrins they come over in swarms, and I've 'eard my dear mother as see 'em all talk about one Grand Duchess as 'ad a bonnet that size as no one couldn't walk near her, and as to takin' any one's harm, why she couldn't

'ave walked 'and in 'and with the Dook of Wellington, as come out a reglar nero, as they played to 'im on the band wherever he went with the Hemperor of Roosher and the King of Proosher, a-makin' that fuss over 'im as if he'd 'ave been their own brother; and well they might arter 'im 'avin' put the kibosh on that there Bonyparty, as I do 'opes is done for now for hever, cos there never won't be no peace nowheres as long as them people's 'eads is above water, as the sayin' is. Not as I wishes 'em drowned, or anythink like that; but let 'em keep quiet with the swag as they've got on the uiet too, cos I'll never believe they're poor; nobody don't want to know wot they've got, so long as they don't go makin' a bother.

But, law bless me, wotever will this 'ere Shar think on this 'ere climate of ours if it keeps on a-turnin' cold agin like this, and the best thing as they could do would be to give 'im the Christshul Pallis for to live in, as can be kep 'ot constant, and he needn't never go out when it were a cold wind, and might 'ave 'is nightingales and roses, and all manner like that, all about; and them play actors, and singers, and dancers might come to amuse 'im; and even Queen Victoria might come and live at the other end among all them images of the other kings and queens, as would be a grand sight of a day when they all walked out together.

I will say as I do think, Mrs. Marblin is about the werry wust dressmaker as ever put a stitch into a gownd of mine, for of all the things as she sent me 'ome was my poile de shever, as is a light-blue over-skirt, and a brown pettycoat, with a streak of mauve in the flounce at the bottom, as is all the go row; not as I should 'ave bought mauve if I 'adn't gone a-shoppin' arter dark. But yet they didn't make a bad match, only that upper-skirt were all a bunch in the small of my back, as 'ad a large bow behind as run up between my bladebones, and then for 'er to turn on me and say as I 'adn't got no waist as she could find out to fit; and not only that, bless you, that tight under my arms as I were reglar like a trusted fowl, with my shoulders up to my ears.

So I was a-sayin' to Mrs. Padwick, as said she'd got a party as were French as 'ad been recommended to 'er as she'd send over to me, and so she did; but she only shook 'er head, and says in 'er broken ways, "Nevare can I to fit such a figger as this," in course illudin' to the dress.

So I says to 'er, "Wee, mamseile, coupey petty pue, off the back, non quite so long behind, and put le bow in front," as seemed to understand me quite well, as in course she would thro' me a-throwin' in them French espressions, as in course do 'elp a forriner in understandin' on you; and as this 'er

were come from 'Ambug, she knowed all the fashuns by 'art.

She took away the dress, and I'd got my bonnet as were the Dolly Wardin shape, but a quiet black, with nothink but a red and yaller rose to light it up, and a few peacock's feathers in a bunch, and one of them stone-coloured weils, and a pink ribbin, for strings as don't tie.

I hordered a new 'ead of 'air, as come 'ome all done up in a bunch behind, with jest enuf chinion to be in the fashun, as were made for the bonnet to come over the partin', and I'd defy the Shar or any double-barrel opera-glass to say as it 'adn't been born on my 'ead. I've got a buff parersole, with a pink linin', as works with a swivel, so as to show which way the wind blows; and am goin' to wear a sky-blue scarf-shawl jest round my neck, as is a imitashun Injier as no one couldn't detect, and I got quite a bargain second-'and, and belonged to a steward's wife as 'ad made seven woyages to Calcutter and back with 'er, so it were more Injier than English arter all.

I didn't mind a-spendin' of the money to look nice, cos I considers it's a dooty for every one to put the best face on it, and not let that Shar think as we're a poor miserable, shabby set; besides, Brown 'ave promised to get me in somewheres quite close to 'im as might be when 'im and Queen Victória is

a-walkin' together, as I'm sure she'd like to see me well dressed, cos, in course, she'll know me in a hinstant thro' 'avin' see me so often in 'er dreams, as it stands to reason if I've been a-dreamin' about 'er she must 'ave been a-dreamin' about me, and is too much the lady to know me over night, and then forget me the next mornin', as is the way with some as I considers stuck-up 'umbugs.

I felt more easy in my mind when my clothes was ready, and that German mamselle 'ad promised me faithful as she'd let me have my gownd by the Saturday; and as I see by the papers as Queen Wictoria weren't a-comin' away from Scotland till the 17th, I says there'll be lots of time for me to be ready, and so 'adn't nothink to do but see arter the 'ouse, as I werry soon got straight; when Mrs. Padwick says to me, "Oh! Martha, you must come down to Woolwich and see the Pembers, as is that busy a-makin' preparashuns for the Shar with luminations, and fireworks, and all manner."

I says, "I'm agreeable."

"Well," she says, "they're a-goin' to 'ave a reglar treat of the fireworks, and a many friends on the Monday, and they want you partikler; cos they wouldn't 'ave no mull on the night as he arrives, cos their oppersite naybours is a-ridiculin' em, and

'opes to crow over em with a Union Jack, a-flyin' 'arf mast 'ighl."

"Law," I says, "I thought that were for a death."

"Yes," she says, "so it is in a general way, but they can't get it up no 'igher, as is as far out of the garret winders as old Pember can reach, and 'is wife won't let the boys swarm up it, thro' it's not bein' fixed firm in the ground."

"Law," I says, "but suppose it should give way and topple over jest as the Shar's a-passin'."

"Oh!" she says, "there aint no fear of that, cos he can't pass that way, thro' it's bein' no thorerfare."

"Well then," I says, "they won't see much, not as I cared much, cos I were a-goin' to get into the Dockyard myself, and should only go in to tea afterwards."

"Oh!" she says, "it aint for the sake of seein' the Shar as Pember's a-doin' it, but jest to spite Gladstin, as he can't a-bear the name on, and wants to show 'im as Woolwich aint quite ruined yet."

"Ah!" I says, "that's wot I call's a British sperrit, not as I considers that Disreely any better than Gladstin; as wouldn't stoop to rite them vulgar novels, as is things as I wouldn't waste my time over, but in course, Disreely must get 'is livin' i'ke the rest on us as don't get much out of Parly-

ment, and only a penshun for being turned out so often, as must be werry aggrawatin'; like this 'ere old Tears in France, as come the bounce werry strong over in Wursales, a-thinkin' as the French couldn't get on without 'im, as 'ave pretty soon showed 'im as they could, and I do 'ope as they'll get a good strong harmy, and not 'ave any more rows, and not go a-talkin' foolishness about 'avin' of their revenge on old Beastmark, but set things right at 'ome fust, and then think of conkerin' their henemies, and make 'em fall, as the sayin' is."

I didn't care much about goin' to Pember's, as is such a rackety lot of boys, and shouldn't never 'ave thought of wearin' all my new things, only Mrs. Padwick, she over persuaded me, a-sayin', "It will be sich a reglar compliment to the Pembers, and I must say I takes a pride in you myself, Martha, for you looks nineteen behind with your panyer."

Little did I think as it were that artful minx, Mary Ann Walby, as 'ad put Mrs. Padwick up to it; not as Mrs. Padwick weren't quite sincere in 'er admirations, but were reglar took in, as Miss Pilkinton told me, when it were all over, as Mary Ann Walby 'ad boasted 'ow she 'ad sold me and 'er too.

I did ought to 'ave took warnin' by Brown's words, as see my things a-layin' on the bed, and says, "I tell you wot it is, Martha, if you goes to

see the Shar dressed like that, he'll 'ave you kidnapped."

I says, "Don't be foolish, Brown;" but thought as preaps it would be a good plan to wear them things on the quiet, as should get used to 'em, and not feel put out if parties did stare at me.

It's jest as well as I did try 'em, for that beast of a Germin if she didn't go and make me my pollernaise with a waist up under my arms as wouldn't 'ave gone round a babby; and as to my under-skirt, it were all down on the ground one side, and 'arf-way up to my 'ip on the other.

I went over to Mrs. Padwick's to dress, and the work as 'er and Miss Pilkinton 'ad to baste that pettycoat on to my slip, and cut away the body of my pollernaise under both arms, and let in two gores for to make it go round me; so I were obligated to wear my cloud tied across my bosom under my harms for to 'ide the cuttin's, as they both said would do for the day, and could be set right agin the Shar's arrival.

Of all the bothers as ever I 'ad, it was my 'ead of 'air and bonnet, as was all fixed in one, but were stuck that full of 'air-pins and wire ribbin as was for all the world like 'avin' of a blister on your bald 'ead; and then the 'airs got a-gettin' loose across my eyes, and ticklin' of my nose, that I were pretty nigh wild, and should 'ave wore it all if Miss

Pilkinton 'adn't took out the 'air-pins, and sowed the 'air to the bonnet; and when I'd got it on, she took and snipped away all the loose 'airs with a pair of cuttin'-out sissors, as I 'ad my misgivin's as she were a-makin' too free with 'em when I 'eard 'er a-clippin' that free all about my ears.

I'd got my feet quite easy thro' 'avin' of a pair of white seaside boots, as is a reglar treshur when the side-springs is easy.

Mrs. Padwick she's never one to dress, but I did think as Miss Pilkinton were shabby; but she says, "Oh! Mrs. Brown, I'm a-goin' as I am, for it wouldn't do for all on us to be dressed like you, as I do believe parties will take you for one of the Shar's wives as it is."

I says, "Miss Pilkinton, it may be a joke on your part, but I don't like a-bein' compared to sich cattle, as is wot I considers 'em, and nothink better."

She see by my looks as I weren't in no chaffin' 'umour, so didn't say no more; and off we went by the bus to Cherrin' Cross, a-goin' by the boat to Woolwich.

It were one of them cloudy days when the sun keeps a-poppin' out and blazes away at you as tho' he was 'avin' of a lark, and I must say as I felt that wusted cloud werry impressive across my chest, as should 'ave undone it, only Miss Pilkinton says,

"For mussy sake don't touch it, for I've been and tacked it, and if you moves a stitch, you'll all go down like a 'ouse of cards."

In course it give me a turn to be told that in the bus, jest as we was close to Cherrin' Cross, as I'd set a-bilin' and a-smotherin' all the way to, thro' a-settin' on the sunny side of the bus.

When we got out there were a tremenjous wind a-blowin' up a side street as we 'ad to go down to get to the steamer, as is no doubt the 'draft as is caused by that great big beast of a Cherrin' Cross Station, as didn't never ought to 'ave been allowed to be built, as is a reglar defacement to that there Imbankment, as is a-beginnin' to look beautiful.

When we got aboard the boat, the wind was dreadful 'igh, and so was the water, if you might judge by the smell as come up ; and glad I were to get shelter near the chimbley, as they kep' a-lettin' down for to get thro' the bridges, as is all built too low.

I can't say as I cares about a steamer of a windy day, as brings all the smoke into your face, and spots of wet keeps a-fallin', as reglar spilte my parrysole in ever so many places.

I 'adn't no consumption the mess as it 'ad made my pollernaise in behind ; but I think as that must 'ave been somethink as I set down on, or leant my back agin without a-thinkin'.

The river looked werry gay thro' so many flags a-flyin' in 'oner of the Shar, as weren't espected for a week; but it's as well to try things afore the last moment, as is why I wore my new things, and the Pembers was a-goin' to try all as they meant to do, so as nothink should go wrong.

Leastways that were wot old Pember said when we got to 'is place, as is in a out-of-the-way part, and a good pull from the steamer, all up 'ill; and I can't say as Woolwich is a sea-side place as I should care to stop at; and I'm sure nobody didn't ought to 'ate Gladstin for sendin' 'em away from it, partikler with their espenses paid.

I've see many jails for confusion, but never nothink like that 'ouse of Pember's for bein' turned out of winders, and not a place to set down in, nor yet a chair as could bear you, and all on 'em at tea, with pickled salmon and crabs, as 'ad give us up thro' the tide bein' agin us, as made us that late.

If I'd knowed wot I were a-goin' to, I'd 'ave put on a 'opsack, but in course there wasn't nothink to be done but bear it; and I'm sure the row as them seven children kep' up, down to the babby at the breast, never no Shar in this world couldn't 'ave 'eard a greater.

One boy 'ad got a drum, and the other a trumpet, and the eldest 'ad a accordion, as they all played, leastways made a noise on together; and

wot with their shouts a-swarmin' up that flag-staff as were in the front garding, thro' Pember 'avin' been in the coast-guard, and 'ad it for one of 'is perkisits in leavin' the service with a wooden leg, as he did afore he married, with a penshun thro' bein over fifty, but as 'ale as a rock, as you could 'ear 'is woice and 'im a-swearin' in the cool of the evenin' from the North Woolwich Gardins, as is over a mile from 'is 'ouse across the river, as shows how far sound will carry.

I am as fond of children as any one, but do think when they can jest run alone, and 'ave been a-eatin' bread and treacle, and all the rest shell-fish, you don't want 'em to daub you all over with their 'ands.

I'm sure I never 'ad such a time, for I couldn't use my 'ands free thro' that cloud tied under my arms, to take my tea, as my wail kep' a-comin' down over my face, and me a-swallerin' my loose 'airs constant, as got across my tung, so can't say as I enjoyed my meal, as were a downwright mockery of misery.

Old Pember, he kep' a-puttin' in 'is 'ead at the winder, a-sayin', "Come out and look at it." So out we went, as told us we was all to be ready for the salute, and as the boys would light up the lumination in front of the 'ouse, as were a transparency, all with one touch, as soon as it were dark enuf.

I must say as that transparency were painted beautiful, as were Queen Wictoria a-sittin' on 'er throne, with 'er crown and spectre, with Britannier as rules the waves at 'er back, and the Shar of Persher a-settin' cross-legged in front of 'er, a-eatin' pickles out of a bottle.

I says, "I've seen that afore."

Says Pember, "Never; it's out of my own 'ead."

"Well, then," I says, "there's someone been a-tellin' lies somewheres."

So when we'd a good look at them things, says Mrs. Pember, "I'm sure you're tired, Mrs. Brown, so do come in, and rest till it's dark, as by that time I shall 'ave my 'ands free, thro' 'avin' got the baby off."

I says to myself, "I 'ope as you'll give it a good wash, poor dear, afore you puts it to bed;" tho' I could see with arf a eye as she weren't one of the soap-and-water lot.

Mrs. Padwick 'ad a old friend a-livin' at Woolwich, leastways were a-dyin there, so she went on to see 'er, along with Miss Pilkinton, as were a relation, as soon as ever they'd 'ad a cup of tea.

Pember was that full of life, a-settin' out in 'is garding a-singin' bits of songs and a-'oorayin', as made me feel sorry as I 'adn't gone along with Mrs. Padwick; but he kep' on a-shoutin' out and

a-drinkin' wot he called fair grog, as were cold rum and water, as I considers beastly stuff, and wouldn't 'ave more than put my lips to it, jest to please 'im, for the world, tho' Mrs. Pember she took a dip at it, now and then, pretty deep, as she said were only for the sake of peace; as I'm sure there wasn't much on where Pember was, as 'ad a voice like a mad bull broke loose.

I set a-talkin' with Mrs. Pember friendly about 'er infant, as she said always slep in the cradle till she went to bed, as I says I don't 'old with them old cradles with rockers, as often 'arbours wermin; and I'm sure that one 'adn't never 'ad a cleanin' out since it were brought 'ome new, as must 'ave been a good deal older than me, a-judgin' by the colour on it; but, laws, Mrs. Pember she said as she 'adn't never 'eard of washin' a cradle, and says, "Why, I should 'ave soon a-thought of washin' a blanket."

"Well," I says, "I 'as mine done every year."

"Law!" says she, "don't it wear 'em out dreadful?"

I says, "I don't know about that; but blankets requires washin' jest the same as 'uman bein's."

"Ah!" she says, "I don't 'old with washin' babies too much, as often brings on sore eyes."

I says, "Are you goin' to lay that little feller down?"

She says, "I must, for I'm a-goin' up jest to wash my face and 'ands, and put on my gownd, by the time as Mrs. Padwick comes back to supper."

I thinks to myself, "And not afore you wants it."

She says, "Won't you take your bonnet off?"

I says, "No, I thank you;" cos I knew if I once got it off I should have to set in my skull cap all the evenin'.

So I says, "No, I'll set 'ere and watch the baby while you're gone."

She says, "I shan't be five minutes."

I says, "Don't 'urry;" a-thinkin as 'arf a 'our wouldn't be a minnit too much for washin' alone; but in course didn't say nothink, cos you never didn't ought to look a gift-'orse in the mouth, and Mrs. Pember's mouth weren't one as nobody wouldn't care to look in at twice unless it were a dentist in want of a job.

I set a-thinkin' over all manner, and as it were a-gettin' dusk, there was old Pember and 'is three boys a-shoutin' and three galls yellin' and gettin' things ready outside, when all of a sudden I see sich a blaze as made me jump up, and ketch up the baby out of the cradle, and 'ad jest turned round a-goin' to make a bolt out of the 'ouse with it, when

there come a reglar blast as knocked me slap back into the cradle, baby and all; then there was flames all out in front, and screams, and 'ollerin', and down come Mrs. Pember a-screamin', and no sooner 'ad she cort sight of my legs a-stickin' up over the side of the cradle, as 'ad turned over agin the wall with my wait, than she laid 'old on 'em, a-tuggin' at 'em and a-cryin' "Murder, 'elp, fire," and in rushed a lot of naybours with pails of water and took and 'arf drowned us.

I screams out, "We aint a-fire."

Mrs. Pember screams, "Come off the baby, do."

I says, "Take your baby," as I 'adn't never let go on, and were as safe as a church, as the say-in' is.

She snatches the child out of my arms, and up I gets, and the fust thing as I see were Pember on the floor with 'is wooden leg gone, and lookin' like a tangled corpse, and them boys a-yellin', and the naybours all a-talkin' with a perliceman, the place floatin' in water, and a nice mess it was altogether.

I soon see as rum were all that were amiss with Pember, as were downright speechless drunk, and then 'eard as 'ow as he 'ad knocked over the can of petroleum, as they was a-goin' to light up the transparency with; as the ashes out of 'is pipe 'ad set in a blaze, jest as he 'ad laid it down, and were a-rammin' down the four-pounder as he were

a-goin' to fire off with 'is wooden leg, and it's a mussy as he 'adn't reglarly loaded it, or he'd 'ave been picked up about Sheerness, but wot powder as there were in it sent 'im backard agin the front palins with that shock, as every one give 'im over for lost.

Jest then Mrs. Padwick and Miss Pilkinton come in, and there I was a-settin' with nothink on my 'ead, my white boots a-swellin' with water, and every rag as I had on me ruined and spilte; my skirt 'ad come off, and both my arms cut of my pollernaise, and as to my bonnet and 'air, they was picked out of that cradle as was swimmin' ir water.

All as I said to Mrs. Padwick were, "Get me home," and it's a mussy as there's slop-shops in Woolwich, where they got me a woollen gownd like a bumboat woman wears, and a nightcap, with a pocket-'andkercher to tie over my 'ead; and Mrs. Padwick she went back to 'er friend and borrered a shawl of the nuss, and they got me to the train. for all I kep' a-beggin' and a-prayin' of them was as they wouldn't put me on nothink of that dirty toad of a Mrs. Pember.

They was a-goin' to 'ave took 'im to the 'ospital, but the doctor as come in said, like me, as it wasn't nothink but lickor and no bones broke; and I'm sure it's a downright mussy as the lot on us weren't sent sky-igh, as the sayin' is.

Anyone as see my clothes in the mornin' as Miss Pilkinton brought 'ome in a bundle, and come and stopped all night with me, would 'ave swore as I'd been on the battle-field. 'Owesome I'm alive to tell the tale I can't think, and I must say as I shed a bitter tear over their rack and ruin; but, law, there's nothink as don't bring a conseration if you takes it proper. For two days afore the Shar were a-comin', Brown come 'ome a-sayin' as he'd got me a ticket for to see 'im land; but he says, "Martha, wotever you do, dress quiet."

"Well," I says, "for that matter, Brown, I'm only goin' to wear wot I've got on," as were a plain alpaca and a black mantle, with a werry neat bonnet, as were my old one done up.

"Ah!" he says, "that's somethink like, and I'm glad as you aint a-goin' to wear that Tom-fool of a thing as I see on the bed."

I didn't make no anser, but turned the subjec', as it were easy for to do thro' Mrs. Bulteel a-comin' in to say 'ow 'er sister-in-law 'ad been smashed up, with three ribs broke, and 'er little finger put out, on the underground railway, as there 'ad been a collusion on, as 'ad never got in the papers.

I says, "I do 'ope as they'll be careful over the Shar when he goes by it, for certingly it is dangerous to them as aint used to it;" and I'm sure it were only the week afore last as I were a-goin' to

Kensal Town by it, and 'ad plenty of time to 'ave got out at the station, and were a-steppin' forard when a party on the platform took and give me a shove back, a-sayin', "The train's in motion," and if it 'adn't been as three on 'em as was behind me in the carridge 'adn't give a wiolent drive at me thro' a wantin' to come out theirselves as sent me a sprawlin', I should 'ave been left behind, or took beyond where I wanted to go; and I do think as parties as goes by it can't be too careful, 'specially forriners, as is a 'elpless lot; and as to Pershuns as is reglar out of their elephants, as the sayin' is, thro' bein' used to a camel or drummydeary, why, a steam-injin confuses them natrally; and, I'm sure, wot with them stairs, and wot with the chokin' as that smoke gives me, partikler at Baker Street station, I always goes underground a-dreadin' of it.

It's all werry well to get lots of money if they do break all your bones, but that wouldn't be no conserlation to me as likes to use my limbs free and active, for I'm sure I wouldn't be drawed about in a bath-chair for the rest of my days, not if they'd give me all the money as I could spend.

I was a-settin' between the lights, as the sayin' is, the evenin' arter Woolwich, as I were espectin' Brown 'ome from Sheffield, when the postman he brought a 'apenny card as were haddressed to me,

a-sayin' as the Lord Mare presents his compliments to Mrs. Brown, and requests the 'oner of 'er company for to meet the Shar of Persher at tea any Monday as she can come.

"Now," I says, "that is civil on him;" but when I come to think it over, I says, "in course it's a 'caks, as it's my opinion Old Sinful is at the bottom on it, and I'll 'ave a larf at 'im in my turn.

So I told Miss Pilkinton as I should like to serve 'im hout; so she says, bein' fond of 'er fun, "Let's send 'im a parcel of a brickbat done up in a bundle of 'ay."

I says, "With all my 'art, so long as there aint nothink in it to 'urt 'im, the same as that wagger-bone sent 'is wife by the railway, a-pretendin' it were a present from her ma, as proved to be a lot of gunpowder, with a hair-trigger all ready to go off the moment as she opened it, as were espectin' baby-linen, poor thing; as must be a nice 'usband to try to blow 'is wife hup like that in them circumstances."

Well, Miss Pilkinton, she done that parcel up werry neat, and directed it with 'er own 'and; and wouldn't send it by the gal, but got the noospaper-boy for to take it to the Parcels' Company while my back were turned, for I was obligated to go and do a little shoppin' at the 'airdresser's, and as I were a-goin' past Mrs. Taplins' door as keeps the Parcel

Delivery, I steps in to pay for some few things as I 'ad 'ad in the way of grocery, and, as she 'adn't got no change, left a sovrin with 'er to take the money as I owed 'er out of it, and send me the change along with the tea and sugar, cos I were a-goin' a little further.

I ordered wot I wanted, and 'ome I went in time for tea; and Miss Pilkinton she made me larf, a-sayin' as Old Sinful would 'ave to pay, for she'd made that parcel that 'eavy thro' a-puttin' in a old dumb-bell as were a odd one, and the broken-off knocker as did used to be on our door when we lived next door to Old Sinful, and was good friends; as some young blackguards was a-wrenchin' off one night, and he come out jest in time to stop 'em, and brought in the broken knocker to me in the mornin'.

So I says, "Wotever did you send that for? Why, he'll know it, as sure as eggs is eggs, as the sayin' is."

"Oh!" she says, "no, he won't, for there's more broken knockers than one in the world."

Well, we chatted away, and went round to Mrs. Padwick's to supper; and I forgot all about my change for my sovrin till the next mornin', when the gal showed it me on the dresser shelf.

I says, "You did ought to 'ave give it me when it come."

She says, "You was gone out when it come last night."

"Well," I says, "and now it's tenpence short; so jest go back with it and tell Mrs. Taplins as the things I bought come to eleven and tenpence, with the arf-crown that was owin' afore, makes fourteen and fourpence, so there did ought to be five and eightpence, accordin' to Cockles, and here is only four and tenpence."

She soon come back, a-sayin' there was tenpence for a parcel as a boy brought yesterday; "And you'd give strick orders," she said, "about always payin' parcels, so she'd took and paid the man."

I was wexed, but says, "It's a lesson to me never to play no more practical jokes, as is things I don't 'old with, partikler in a lady;" but I didn't say nothink, as I were that busy with the 'ouse, and got everythink ready, thro' espectin' Liza and 'er 'usban', and a aunt, up in town, jest to see the Shar and all the fine sights; as she rote me a note a-sayin' they was comin', and she 'ad sent me a basket, with poultry and things; and sure enuf, about seven o'clock the basket come.

"Well," I says, "it aint been long on the road;" and a good-sized 'amper, tho' werry old and tied up with a clothes-line, thro' bein' dreadful 'cavy, and the man as carried it down in the kitchen, as I give a pint of beer besides the carridge, as were

two shillins, says, "I think you'd better unpack it as soon as you can, for there's game in it or some-think."

"Law!" I says, "my good man, it's poultry and new-laid eggs, and, I dessay, a cream cheese or two, as Liza knows as 'er father's partial to."

But the gal come up in a few minnits and says, "Oh, please mum, I can't bear that basket in my kitchen, as is reglar pison."

I 'urries down and soon cut them cords, and never in your life did you see sich a mask of filth as was in that basket, as was stones and dead cats, with rats and a lot of fishes' insides, with a paper inside—"To Mrs. Brown, with the Shar's love."

We couldn't bear the 'ouse for it, and I 'ad to send the gal round for the pot-boy, to berry them in the back yard of the public-'ouse, as cost me another shillin, and 'ad to 'ave the kitchen all cleaned agin; and didn't get the smell on it out of my nose all night, for I can't abear anythink like putrefaction about the place, as is apt to breed fevers; and I do 'ope as this 'ere Shar won't be a bringin' none in 'is sweet, as they calls it, but not over sweet, I'll be bound, as don't seem to be so fond of spendin' their money, any 'ow, but goes into the shops over there a-askin the price, and then not a-buyin' nothink, as won't suit some of the London shops, I can tell 'em.

I'm sure the man at a mantle shop where I tried on six or seven last week and couldn't get one to fit me, were quite rude over it, a-sayin' as he only 'ad goods as would fit ladies, not monstrosities, as made me give 'im a bit of my mind, cos I can't a-bear cheek in no one, and I aint a-goin' to buy a mantle as I couldn't make meet across my chest.

But, law, arter all, wotever is my trouble compared to Queen Victionary, as'll 'ave to travel pretty nigh a thousand miles to meet 'im, and wotever can she care for 'im when all's said and done ; as I'm sure don't care if he was to take Injier away from 'er, cos she aint likely never to go there, not even when the railway's done, as will be a wonderful thing, tho', in course, we shouldn't 'ave done if we wasn't a-goin' to keep it ; but it's all werry fine for to talk about takin' anythink from us, but when that Shar comes to see our troops and wolunteers, partikler the Middlesex Militier, and them guns as can carry twenty miles and shoots you dead afore you can 'ear the report, why, he'll think twice afore he talks of goin' to war with us unless that there 'old Beast-mark were to 'umbug 'im into war jest for a escuse to grab all 'is money, as wants to please 'im, for I hear as he's been a-seein' fine sights over there in Berling, as no doubt 'ave bored 'im to death.

But, law, we do live in wonderful times to be

sure, and there's no knowin' what will appear next; not as I'm one to 'old with old Moffat and 'is Profits; cos I don't believe as anybody knows when the world is a-comin' to a end; but in course there will be best off as does when it 'appens; but, in course, afore the world is done up, all them waste lands will be used as 'ave been a-layin' useless all these years, the same as the commons did used to be afore so many of 'em was inclosed, and when all Europe, Asier, and Africer is built over, and lighted with gas, and railroads everywhere, there won't be no-think more to do then, so the end must come; but that won't be jest yet any'ow; but all in good time, no doubt. And I do 'ope as this 'ere Shar will go back 'ome a better man, when he's seen wot goold people we are, all 'appy and contented, leastways they do say we ought to be with sich lovely laws to make us good, and all publics shet up by eleven o'clock Sunday night, so as you may starve if you 'appens to be out later than that in the country, cos we all knows as it's a sin for to eat and drink of a Sunday night unless you belongs to a Club, or as got a good larder and cellar at 'ome. So there aint one law for the rich and another for the poor. Oh! no.

And, in course, he'll be a deal more moral when he finds as rich Inglishmen never deserts or neglects their lawful wife; and the poor man never knocks

'er down and 'arf murders 'er, and then gets three weeks or a month, but would 'ave six months for stealin' a book.

Oh! he's got a deal to learn, and will go back and be sure to 'ave judges and juries of 'is own, cos he'll see what a blessin' they are when there's a claimint in the case; and he'll be sure to want a Parlyment when he sees wot a lot of work ourn gets thro' and don't waste no time in talkin' and quarrelin', and none on 'em don't want to be in power, as they calls it, and don't care about wot they gets by it, and only does it for love of their country. And then he'll see wot a blessin' it is to be Crist-shuns, as all loves one another, and 'ow them ministers don't get nothink by it, as will put to shame some of them priests of 'is'n as only follers religion like a trade, and a good one too, and isn't ready, like our Bishops as is misshunaries, to go to the wildest places to convert the 'eathen and won't come 'ome for a 'oliday, and would rather be killed than give it up.

Oh! he's got a deal to learn, and much good may it do 'im, when he 'ave learnt it.

I've 'eard say when them 'lied suffrins come over 'ere they asked where all the poor people was; and that's wot the Shar will ask, and he'll find out that there aint no poor nor miserable, ignorant people in London, as is dyin' for want by thousands, whilst

there's a-many as is livin' rollin' in riches as they can't spend ; cos that's the way as I've 'eard say as they goes on in Persher.

I do 'ope as he won't go a-ridin' thro' London a-throwin' of pusses about full of gold, cos they aint wanted.

They do say as he's orful orty, and don't bow nor bend to nobody, leastways didn't in Berlin, and I dessay thinks it's like their impidence for to dare to stare at 'im, cos in 'is own country they all fallis flat on their faces as he comes by ; but he'll learn 'ere as a cat may look at a king, as the sayin' is ; and I'm sure I wouldn't fall flat on my face for all the Shars as ever was born, as makes me thankful as I were born a free Britten, as knows my duty, and when last I see Queen Wictoria a-comin' out of the Park, and made my obedience to 'er, the bow as she give me showed the queen all over, besides the lady ; as is better than crouchin' slaves at your feet, cos you may take their 'eads but can't never 'ave their 'arts, as is wot Queen Wictoria 'ave got by the score.

But, law bless me, that there Shar wouldn't be 'appy over 'ere any more than we should be 'appy in Persher ; for I dessay if he were a-livin' 'ere and a School-board come a-askin' 'im whether he sent 'is little shars to school, I wonder wot he'd do. I 'ope he'd up and give 'im a good kick, and send

'im flyin' out of doors, for darin' to interfere in 'is family, as is a pretty piece of business for to 'ave the perlice a-bullyin' you over sendin' your children to school, and a-finin' you, as might as well dictate to you and send you to prison, like Queen Lizzy-beth did, about your sendin' 'em to church, as is wot that old Beastmark is a-doin' over in Germany, and we're a-goin' to imitate 'im 'ere ; but let Gladstin try it on, that's all, for if we gives in nice slaves we shall soon be ; and if it was the Pope as came a-dictatin' like this 'ere School-board and old Beastmark, there'd be a pretty row over it.

It won't do to say much on the pint of eddication to the Shar, cos in course that's 'is weak spot with 'im, as the sayin' is, cos he don't seem to know nothink but 'is own langwidge, and not much of that ; yet, as I says to Brown, preaps it's 'is depth, as don't want for to be pumped by old Gladstin, as looks that grim, as he's enuf to frighten any one, and it's lucky as he can't order your 'ead off if you don't pay your income tax, as they do say the werry look on 'im frightens every one, partikler them poor bishops, into fits, for fear as he should get in a bad temper and take and disestablish the lot in a rage, like Ireland.

They says as the Shar is the 'ead of 'is own church, like Queen Wictoria 'erself, and can order 'is people to believe wot he pleses, as Queen

Wictoria is too much the lady for to try sich a game with us, and would 'ave 'er work cut out a-makin' Whalley agree with the Catholics, and the Jews and the Methodists, and the Freethinkers with them Ritialists, and the 'Stablished Church with Braidlaugh, to say nothink of all the others, as it requires any one as clever as Gladstin to go with them all, as is why they calls 'im the people's William, as I've 'eard say, tho' he do praise them books of Braidlaugh's on Blackheath, is werry 'igh church at home, but preaps that's 'is good lady's doin's, as is always a-lettin' us know the good as she's a-doin' thro' a-'ritin' to the papers, and is that fond of the people as she come out at the winder, and bowed to them 'ard-workin' roughs as met in Trafalgar Square.

For my part, I think it's a mussy as that Shar don't understand no English, cos he can't read the papers, as I'm sure we did ought to be thankful for, as he can't see wot a nice lot we are; and I do 'ope as nobody won't go a-translatin' em to 'im, cos he won't think much on us with all our bounce about our religion and wirtues; and I do think as it's 'ard on 'im not to be put up to 'is way about, so shall jest send 'im the straight tip myself over a few things, as I've been a-puttin' down on paper, as will be a letter rote quite like a lady, and not one as he can take for a beggin'-letter nor yet a billy-doo.

So I shall 'rite :—Mrs. Brown's compliments to the Shar of Persher, as 'ave called 'er a moon-faced woman in 'is dreams, leastways that is wot I see as clear as daylight in my dreams, and a-thinkin's as he don't know all our ins and outs, as the sayin' is, she'll give 'im a 'int, tho' I'm thankful to think as you aint a-goin' to be sent to a hin, like others as been afore now, tho' they was crowned 'eads, and the Pallis empty ; but preaps you might want to be out on the quiet, as is the real way for to see the country, and not go a-ridin' thro' it with sojers all round your carridge, but jest start off by yourself, and wotever you do don't walk out in them jewels, and take a umbreller for fear of the garrotters, and never can tell wot the day is likely to turn out ; and don't leave off many of your underclothin' too suddin, as may be 'ot in the mornin' and quite chilly in comin' 'ome.

And if you goes by train, mind as you takes a third-class ticket, and don't be in no 'urry to get into the train, cos if you waits till it's full they'll shove you neck and crop into a fust-class carridge, and you may set on ladies' knees all the way up, as would rather 'ave you than three roughs the wuss for licker, as come to blows afore the journey's end.

And mind if you're out Sunday to 'ave some-think in the 'ouse to eat and drink, cos you can't get a bit or drop arter 'leven o'clock, and mind

when you wants to buy anythink, as you borrs some one's ticket for the Copperative Stores, and you'll get things one-fourth cheaper, tho' you must take 'em 'ome yourself, cos they won't send 'em, and that's 'ow it is as nearly all them as deals there, is carridge folks, tho' they are only Government clerks, as all make large fortins thro' the savin's.

And when you goes in a bus mind you makes 'im stop while you gets out, and don't pay 'im till you're safe on dry land, cos if you do, he'll say "All right," with you on the step sent a-flyin'

And if you takes my advice, you won't be took in by none of them shops as is sellin' silver and gold for nothink, and don't buy no cheap silks for your fieldmales—I mean in course your mothers and sisters, and not them creeturs you was obligated to send back thro' a-kickin' up that row about wantin' to go to the play, as were only natral, as you was a-goin' yourself; but now you've got rid on 'em you can go where you likes, tho' it aint no use you're a-goin' to the English plays, cos there's none worth secin', leastways so they tells me, for I never goes myself, and as you don't understand nothink you can go to the French plays, as is that immoral as they aint allowed; not as they could do the parties as goes any 'arm, for they don't understand 'em any more than you.

Parties as knows all about it says as the English

can't hact, and that the French does it to rights, so you'd better go and see them.

And mind as you 'as a latch key, as no doubt Queen Wictoria will allow you at Buckenham Pallis; tho' you can't expect it at Winsor, and won't want it cos the last train's twelve o'clock, and if you're in by one now and then, the servants can't grumble; and as to Queen Wictoria, I've 'eard say as she wouldn't set up for 'er own grandfather arter eleven.

So no more at present, but if you feels at a loss for anythink, send to me as 'ave put my card in, as I don't want every one to know my address, cos I should be worreted to death with inwitations to balls and parties, as I don't care about, let alone beggin' letters, as would come by the bushel, and some on 'em not prepaid, as means without avin' Queen Wictoria's own 'ead stamped on.

But remember, if they tries to put upon you anywheres, you've always got a true friend to turn to in yours till death us do part, as is my best wishes, and only 'opes you'll like us and our ways, as 'ave took the dooty off sugar, a-'earin' you was a sweet tooth, and will stand by us if them Rooshuns want to bully us, so don't forget in feelin' unwell, as you may send in safety for yours ever,

MARTHA BROWN,

'er X mark.

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